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BY GUSTAVO ARELLANO

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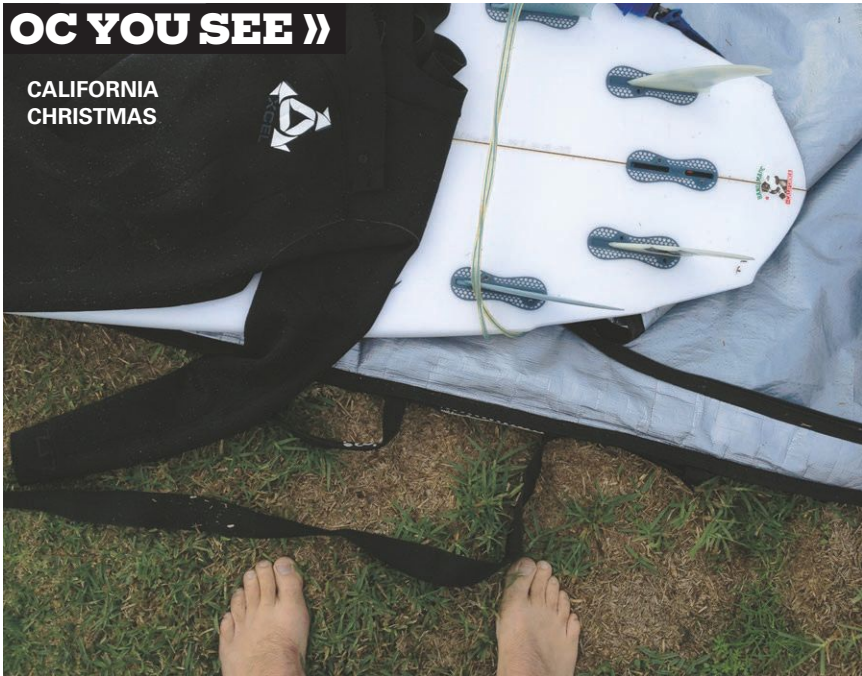
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CALIFORNIA CHRISTMAS



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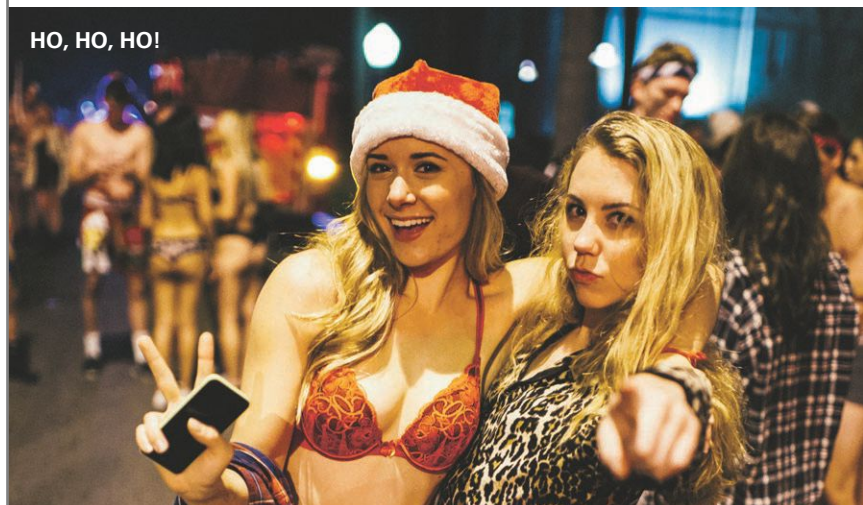
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Illustration and design by Dustin Ames

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Costa Mesa's Boobgate

Charges against private investigators working for the police union's law firm exposes shady tactics
BY MATT COKER

It's already about a month old, but the story of how private investigators working on behalf of the Costa Mesa Police Officers Association got charged with felonies deserves repeating—even *The Naked Gun* couldn't create a plot this juicy.

To wit: Christopher Joseph Lanzillo of Lake Arrowhead and Canyon Lake resident Scott Alan Impola, 46, used boobs to try to pry damaging information from one city councilman and planned to follow two other council members to Las Vegas in hopes of catching at least one snorting cocaine off a prostitute, according to Orange County Superior Court records. Following an exhaustive investigation by the Orange County district attorney's office (OCDA) that relied on FBI and Costa Mesa police records, surveillance video, phone and text message records, newspaper articles, websites, and interviews with a rogue's gallery of players, the two were arrested late last month.

Each was originally held on \$25,000 bail and charged with two felony counts of conspiracy to commit a crime of unlawful use of an electronic tracking device, one felony count of false imprisonment by deceit, and one felony count of conspiracy to commit a crime of falsely reporting crime to an agency. Lanzillo and Impola, both former Riverside police officers, worked as investigators for now-defunct Upland law firm Lackie, Dammeier, McGill, and Ethir, which the Costa Mesa cop union hired to conduct "candidate research," including surveillance of Costa Mesa City Council members, in the months leading up to the November 2012 election.

The firm, which represented several Southern California law-enforcement unions, boasted on its website about the "Playbook" used during contract negotiations with cities. The Playbook called for targeting city or county officials seen as "hostile" to the police unions; talked of "various tools available to an association to put political pressure on decision makers"; and noted the goal was not to sway the public, but rather to "simply annoy decision makers into giving in to your position." A "Public Blunders" bullet point called for specifically making known the mistakes of a mayor, council member, city manager or police chief, advising the pressure continue "until that person assures you [of] his loyalty, and then move on to the next victim."

Gary Monahan, Jim Righeimer and Steve Mensinger represented a Costa Mesa City Council majority in 2012 that the cop union considered hostile during contract negotiations in the months leading up to city elections because they favored reining in

pension costs.

According to an affidavit by OCDA Investigator Kory DeGraffenreid filed with the arrest warrants for Lanzillo and Impola, the private investigators used GPS devices to unlawfully track the vehicles of Mensinger and an attorney with a law firm that was a Lackie, Dammeier, McGill, and Ethir competitor. Lanzillo is alleged to have used cash to purchase the devices from an Ontario spy shop and the phony names Robert Teller and Teller Investigations to subscribe to the tracking service.

Apparently, the union was prepared to follow Mensinger and Righeimer all the way to Las Vegas, according to a May 3, 2012, email that is also included in DeGraffenreid's affidavit. The message is from Costa Mesa Police Officers Association treasurer Mitch Johnson to then-president Jason Chamness, board member Rob Dimel and negotiator Paul Beckman (all of whom remain members of the Costa Mesa police force):

"If it hasn't already been discussed, maybe we should think of informing DETER that RIGG and MESS will be in Vegas soon. I'm sure they will be dealing with other 'developer' friends, a Brown Act or two, and I think Mess if [sic] a dooper and has moral issues. I could totally see him sniffing coke of [sic] a prostitute. Just a thought."

(To clarify: DETER is Lackie, Dammeier, McGill, and Ethir partner Dieter Dammeier; RIGG is Righeimer; and MESS is Mensinger. And I'm going to take a wild stab that Johnson meant to write, "I could totally see him sniffing coke OFF a prostitute.")

Using the wiles of a shapely woman also figures into Lanzillo and Impola targeting Monahan. The affidavit states that video surveillance from Skosh Monahan's restaurant shows Impola was in the councilman's business on Aug. 22, 2012, when Monahan, Righeimer and Mensinger were there. So was Kendrin Haskell, who walked in "dressed in jeans with decorative adornments on the back pockets, [a] lace V-neck blouse exposing her cleavage, with a large gray, over-the-shoulder handbag," DeGraffenreid notes in the affidavit.

Impola is seen alone at a table covering his mouth with his hand while speaking into a cell phone, and records would later indicate he was talking or texting with Lanzillo, Dammeier and Haskell at the time, the affidavit states. Haskell positioned herself in a way to get Monahan's attention, and it worked, as both are seen in the video briefly chatting with one another; the OCDA investigator writes.

"She is hooking Monaghan [sic] now... He



RIGHEIMER: AND YOU CALLED HIM PARANOID...

CHASEN MARSHALL

is in love she has his cell#," Impola wrote in one coded text to Lanzillo, referencing Monahan and Haskell.

Monahan would later tell investigators that the woman told him she was waiting for a friend who didn't show and that she had just moved into the area from Seattle and wanted to know more about the city. "They talked about football, and she filled out a mailing-list card with the name Shelby Mitchell" and an email address, DeGraffenreid states. While leaving, she told Monahan she would be back, and the councilman "remembered giving Haskell his business card, which had his cell phone number on it."

Monahan told the OCDA the woman never returned or called. After being served a search warrant, Haskell admitted knowing Impola, whom she'd met through her family, and confirmed she had gone to Skosh Monahan's that August day, but she said she only had a drink alone. When the OCDA investigator noted the restaurant's surveillance video showed she'd chatted up Monahan, Haskell asked to speak with her attorney. Her cell phone contained a photo of Monahan, Righeimer and Mensinger sitting at a table in the restaurant and a campaign photo of Monahan, the affidavit also notes.

It was a different incident involving the restaurant that same August day that led to the investigation that culminated with the arrests of Lanzillo and Impola. The latter had observed Righeimer drinking a couple of dark-colored beverages before leaving and getting into his black Yukon to drive home around 5:45 p.m.

Lanzillo is accused of calling 9-1-1 to falsely report he saw a man stumble out of Skosh Monahan's and get into a

black Yukon, which Lanzillo followed and claimed to see swerve on the road as if the driver were under the influence of alcohol or disabled. Lanzillo told a Costa Mesa police dispatcher that he followed the Yukon to a home, giving Righeimer's address.

With Lanzillo watching from his parked white SUV, the councilman was briefly detained outside his home during the DUI investigation. But Righeimer passed a sobriety test and was determined to not be under the influence because he'd only consumed Diet Cokes, not alcohol, at Skosh Monahan's.

Lanzillo later admitted during questioning that Righeimer did not stumble out of the bar and was not swerving when he drove, but DeGraffenreid also writes in the affidavit that Lanzillo later contradicted himself, saying that the officer who confronted Righeimer probably backed off when he realized the suspect was a council member.

Righeimer immediately went public with accusations that he was put under surveillance by the police union, which claimed the elected official was paranoid. But Righeimer and Mensinger have an active lawsuit in Orange County Superior Court against the union, its former law firm and Lanzillo.

Ironically, the mother of Lanzillo's wife feared Righeimer would sue her son-in-law, according to an Aug. 25, 2012, text exchange between Christopher and Kellie Lanzillo that is included with DeGraffenreid's affidavit. "OMG... even if we got sued dieter [sic] would cover the cost," the husband assures the wife. "I Can't believe she [sic] so worried. I didn't plant dope on him."

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ask a mexican!»



DEAR MEXICAN: How did the patron saint of Mexico get a name that's derived from Arabic?

El Moro Judío

DEAR JEWISH MOOR: You're referring to the Virgin of Guadalupe, the brown-skinned apparition of the Virgin Mary who, tradition says, appeared before the Aztec peasant Juan Diego in December 1531 just outside modern-day Mexico City. As you correctly noted, Guadalupe's etymological roots spring from Arabic: the name is a mishmash of the Arabic word for valley (*wadi*) and the Latin *lupus* (wolf) and was what the Moors called a river in the Extremadura region of Spain. Hernán Cortés and his merry band of murderous Extremadurans venerated a Black Madonna found near their hometown river, so it's no stretch to theorize that any Holy Mother appearing before a bunch of Mexicans on the conquistadors' watch would assume the *nombre* of Guadalupe.

But another school of thought favored by many Mexican and Chicano scholars argues that Guadalupe got Her name thanks to Span-ish stupidity. They maintain that Spanish clerics misunderstood Juan Diego when he told them *la virgen* called Herself *Tlecuahtlapcúeuh* ("She who comes flying from the region of light and music and intones a song, like the eagle of fire" in Nahuatl) and *Coatlaxopeuh* ("I crushed the serpent with my foot"). The two terms are rough homonyms of Guadalupe, goes the tale, so the Spaniards assumed Juan Diego meant their goddess and renamed his brown virgin Guadalupe. The problem with this revisionist theory, however, is that it has no basis in historical fact. The German theologian Richard Nebel pointed out in his 1992 study *Holy Mary Tonantzín Virgin of Guadalupe: Religious Continuity and Transformation in Mexico*, "Until today, no one has found any document from the 16th century in which one can verify the Nahuatl phonetic origins of the word that the Spaniards supposedly thought resembled 'Guadalupe.'" Besides, the idea of an Islamic-

» GUSTAVO ARELLANO

derived Guadalupe is better: Imagine how freaked out *gabachos* will get when they discover the Empress of the Americas is part Muslim!

DEAR MEXICAN: I'm a Mexican *güero*—light-skinned, green-eyed and blond/brown-haired. I experience more racism from my own people than from *gabachos*. Why so much hate toward Mexican *güeros* from my darker-skinned *raza*? Do I remind the *pinches indios* too much of their Spanish conquerors? Are they just jealous their horny *rucas* and sisters keep putting the moves on me? All of the above?

Güero and Loving It!

DEAR WAB: The only thing Mexicans alternately love and hate more than *los Estados Unidos* are *güero* (light-skinned) Mexicans. Blame the Aztecs: When the light-skinned, bearded Spaniards showed up in Mexico in 1519, Moctezuma and his *amigos* thought the conquistadors were manifestations of Quetzalcoatl, a light-skinned, bearded deity that oral tradition promised would return to save mankind in 1519—the very year the Spaniards showed up. The Spaniards quickly put that myth to waste by destroying the Aztec empire, but that initial reverence for *güeros* seared itself into the Mexican psyche. Light skin became synonymous with power, wealth, destruction. Dark skin meant *india*: loser, poor, *estúpido* enough to believe marauders were gods. Not even the efforts of Mexican intellectuals during the 1920s to popularize the idea of Mexicans as *la raza cósmica* (the cosmic race, made up of black, Indian and white blood) could destroy the stranglehold *guerismo* has on Mexico. That's why you see light-skinned Mexicans on television, in the presidential palaces and in corporate offices. Being a Mexican *güero* takes you only so far, though, *Güero and Loving It*: You're still Mexican, after all.

ASK THE MEXICAN

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Hey You!

» ANONYMOUS

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to you that it was dangerous for him and that, had he fallen, he would have been seriously hurt? I'm sure if his mother were there, she would have been alarmed that you would put the boy in such danger. You don't deserve to be left alone with him. I would have confronted you, but if you're that stupid, you might also be that dangerous.

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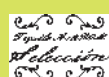
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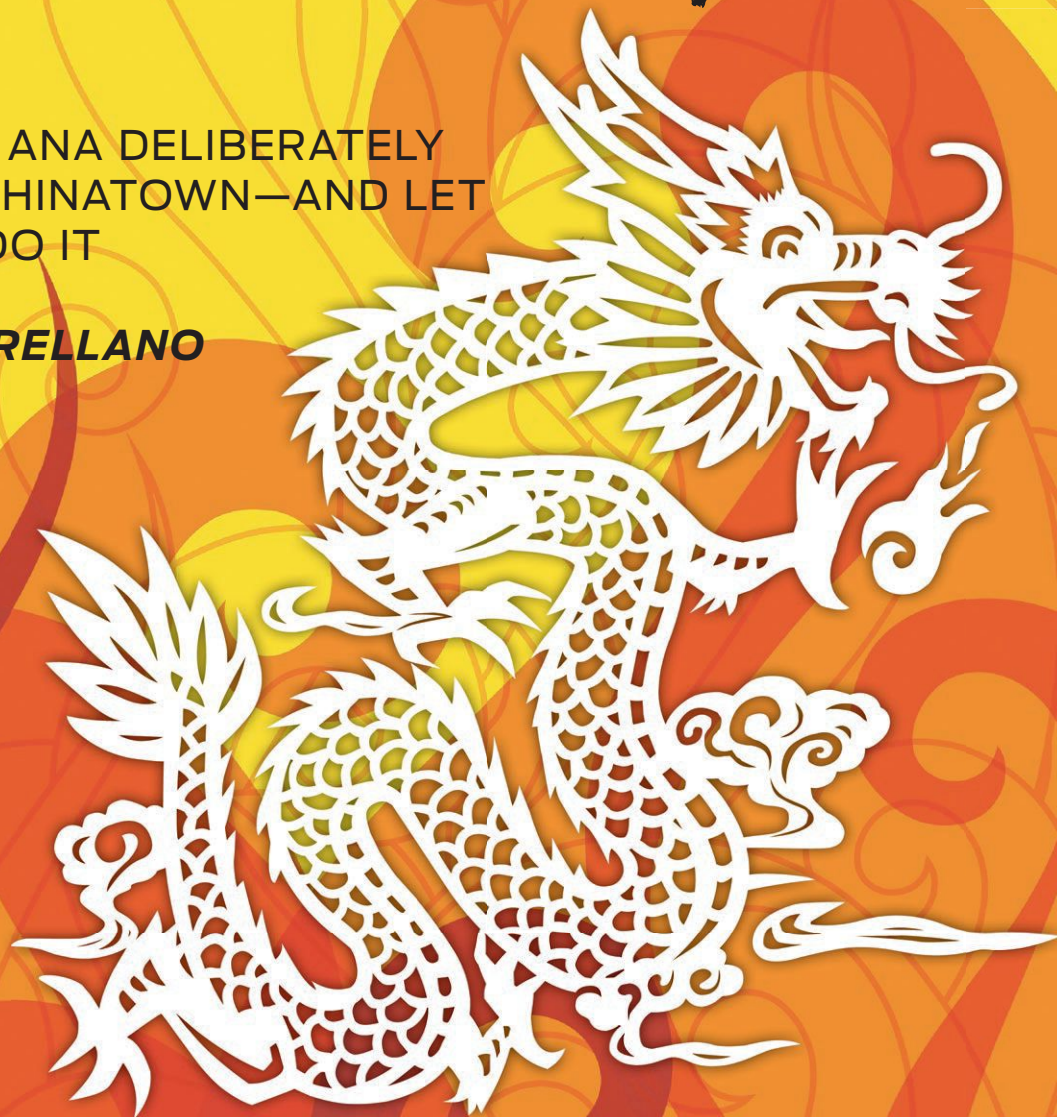
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BURN, CHINATOWN, BURN

IN 1906, SANTA ANA DELIBERATELY
TORCHED ITS CHINATOWN—AND LET
A MAN DIE TO DO IT

BY GUSTAVO ARELLANO



The atmosphere was jovial as more than 1,000 people gathered in downtown Santa Ana on May 25, 1906, to watch their civic dream come true: the burning of the city's Chinatown.

Politicians and residents alike had long pushed for the torching, and now was the time to do it. The once-thriving area—bounded by present-day Main, Third and Bush streets—was almost vacant, atrophied over the years by anti-Chinese laws that made a peaceful life there impossible. Health officials had just condemned Chinatown's few remaining buildings, rounding up out the last residents as onlookers jeered. A representative of China's minister to the United States was rushing in from Los Angeles, seeking to stop the planned kindling. But Santa Ana would be denied no more.

Families gathered to witness the destruction, along with law enforcement and businessmen—the whole town, it seemed. "It was like a big picnic, or a Fourth of July," an eyewitness recalled decades later. A fire marshal was on the scene to douse coal oil on Chinatown's structures and set the blaze. But light drizzle throughout the day put a damper on everyone's plans; the fire marshal couldn't strike a spark.

That delay thinned the original crowd to a couple of hundred curious onlookers as the evening arrived.

But when the first flames curled up to the sky around 8 p.m., visible for blocks around, a stampede returned "in time to see the fun," according to the *Santa Ana Evening Blade*.

Meanwhile, the man who made the fun possible lay in a cot about 50 yards away, alone in a tent surrounded by barbed wire and under the watch of a guard. A sign nearby warned, "LEPROSY: KEEP OUT." A doctor had diagnosed Wong Woh Ye with the dreaded disease just a day earlier—the perfect excuse for the Santa Ana City Council to push out Ye and the last of Chinatown's residents. They were put in a quarantine zone, within eyesight of their former neighborhood as it turned to ashes, close enough to hear the crowd's approving roar.

This inferno is oft-told in the annals of Orange County history, almost always presented as a necessary destruction. "An eyesore to us all," declared Nellie Tedford, a founding member of the Orange County Historical Society and an eyewitness to the blaze, in the 1931 collection *Orange County History Series: Volume One*.

"The sight and smell of the premises was objectionable to the entire community," wrote Charles D. Swaner, who witnessed the burning as a 12-year-old, in

his 1953 memoir, *Santa Ana: A Narrative of Yesterday*. OC's most fabled historian, Jim Sleeper, described the area "as a pretty ratty-looking place and got worse."

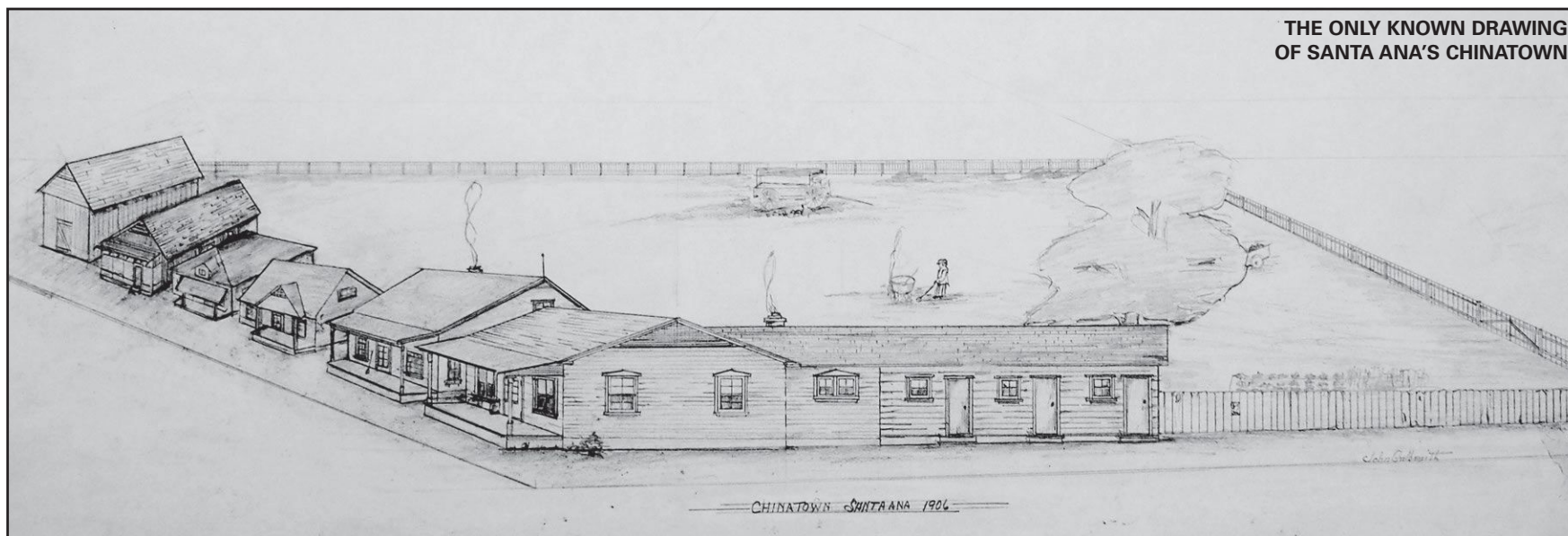
It's as if repeating that Santa Ana's Chinatown deserved to disappear, historians and residents could justify in their minds the nasty means to the enclave's hellish end. But such a stance misses an obvious, long-ignored point: In order to rid Santa Ana of Chinese once and for all, doctors and politicians were willing to let a man die.

Santa Ana's Chinatown began in the wake of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, a federal law that prohibited the country's immigrants from legally entering the United States or ever becoming citizens. Although Chinese had peacefully lived in Orange County since the 1870s in Anaheim and Tustin, popular opinion was turning against them. In 1879, Denis Kearney—the California activist who coined the infamous phrase "The Chinese must go!"—stopped in Santa Ana in 1879 to preach his xenophobic message.

But the Chinese kept coming. Santa Ana was becoming a midway point between Mexico (where an

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

THE ONLY KNOWN DRAWING OF SANTA ANA'S CHINATOWN



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BURN, CHINATOWN, BURN

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increasing number of Chinese were landing before illegally entering the United States) and Los Angeles, and the city's residents needed their cheap services. By 1882, downtown Santa Ana boasted two Chinese wash houses; lodging, drugstores and curio shops soon sprang up. A vegetable garden and barn served as a commons of sorts because the Chinese dominated the vegetable-delivery business in Orange County in those days. Adolph Butz, owner of a plumbing store across the street from Chinatown, told a historian decades later that he thought 200 people lived there at its height, but he also complained the area "became a menace to health" and "had a bad effect on the value of nearby property."

Soon, residents declared war. An 1886 *Santa Ana Standard* editorial titled "The Heathen Chinese" railed against "his dark ways and vain tricks." By 1888, the Santa Ana City Council had formed a committee given the task of asking downtown property owners to not rent to Chinese. "The location of Chinamen right in the heart of the city is a great detriment to all property in the neighborhood," the *Evening Blade* wrote in an article simply titled "Remove the Chinese." "We suggest that immediate action be taken to eradicate this plague spot—this eyesore of the city."

Editorials and offers didn't work, so white citizens began a campaign of terror. Men threw rocks at the Chinese, with little fear of repercussion; kids openly stole from their stores. The region's newspapers cast Chinatown as a den of iniquity, its residents barely human. A popular chant of the era was "Chin, chin, Chinamen, chin, chin, Chinamen, you eat rats!" In 1893, unidentified men burned down a Chinese boarding house in western Santa Ana, shooting at lodgers as they tried to escape. Robberies were so frequent that vegetable sellers buried their money in the ground. Tensions were high enough that in 1896, celery farmers in present-day Fountain Valley had to hire

guards to protect their Chinese workers from Americans.

Even when the Chinese tried to do good, Americans smacked them down. Native-born Ong Q. Tow, who owned a shop in Chinatown and had built a replica of the *U.S.S. Maine* in the wake of its sinking to display his patriotism, tried to enlist in Company L. That was Santa Ana's chapter of the State Guard, which was preparing to fight in the Spanish-American War. They refused his request, citing his Chinese heritage. (Tow went on to enlist anyway, becoming one of the first Chinese-Americans to fight in the Army.)

The anti-Chinese offensive worked. The 1900 Census showed only 19 people remained in Chinatown. That was too many for the city fathers, though. So in 1901, Santa Ana sent its mayor, a councilman and a Chamber of Commerce member to a statewide convention in San Francisco that sought to renew the Exclusion Act and share strategies on how to rid California of Chinamen; it was the only OC city to send a delegation. In 1904, the Santa Ana City Council passed a law severely penalizing Chinese abalone fisherman; seems they were outfishing their Anglo counterparts, and, as the *Los Angeles Herald* wrote, "the less wily Caucasians were compelled to resort to ordinances" in order to compete.

That year, the council also acquired a lot in Chinatown to build a new City Hall and gentrify the Chinese away. City founder William Spurgeon suggested they relocate near the municipal dump, but residents there opposed having "Celestials" so near their homes. The solution, according to the *Evening Blade*? After paying the Chinese \$400 and giving them 30 days "to settle their business affairs," the city should ban them from Santa Ana altogether and finish off Chinatown.

"The burning of [the area]," they wrote, "will be the occasion of a sort of celebration of the consummation of the first part of the plan to rid the city of undesirable residents."

So by the time doctors found a supposed leper there two years later, the city's consensus had already been reached: The

Chinatown as remembered by John Galbraith. He was 4 years old when the area was burned. The sights and smells of the buildings formed an indelible impression on his mind. This drawing was made in 1982. Mr. Galbraith was a contractor during his working years. This is the corner of 3rd and Bush

Chinese had to go. And now they had the perfect scapegoat.

The threat of leprosy and other diseases had long been used by Americans to rid their towns of the Chinese, usually by mobs. Government-sponsored leveling of Chinatowns, however, were rare. In 1900, Honolulu's district burned down after officials set fire to it, ostensibly to fight bubonic plague. But when San Francisco officials announced they weren't going to allow the local Chinese to rebuild Chinatown after the city's devastating April 1906 quake, the Chinese government protested, and the neighborhood was rebuilt without incident.

While the atmosphere was always right for Santa Ana to rid itself of its Chinatown, officials kept hesitating, as if waiting for an excuse to shield them from accusations of racism. And they found it in Wong Woh Ye.

Nothing is known about Ye's life; he appears in no business directories, census lists or voter rolls. Newspapers reported he had lived on and off in Santa Ana's Chinatown for 20 years and that he had come down with something that left sores on his skin, although roommates remarked

he was eating all his meals and was getting no worse. But someone lost to history alerted Dr. Jesse M. Burlew, a private practitioner who visited Chinatown on May 24, 1906, and saw Ye. He deemed Ye a leper and alerted members of the city's health board, who, the *Evening Blade* said, found "a startling state of affairs" filled with "sickening filth" ready to contaminate the city's vegetable supply. Santa Ana Health Officer John I. Clark warned housewives to not buy their greens from the Chinese anymore, with the *Evening Blade* writing that "the Mongolians are wily enough to hide the loathsome signs [of disease] as long as possible."

Ye and seven other Chinese were quickly quarantined on the south side of the Chinatown lot, in tents surrounded by barbed wire; Ye received his own tent "until such time as the supervisors can provide a more suitable place for him." Their belongings were left behind to "probably be confiscated and burned," per the *Evening Blade*.

The following night, the city's Board of Health issued a resolution calling for Chinatown's end by fire "as the most effectual method of destroying and stamping out the germs of leprosy." The measure passed

unanimously the following morning at a special City Council meeting. There was some discussion about whether they were authorized to burn down the buildings without the permission of owner Martha Shaffer—one council member wondered why they couldn't be boarded up until she returned from Hermosa Beach. Shaffer's attorney warned the council that "they would regret taking such extreme measures," according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

But the attorney, the *Times* chortled, "was requested to attend to his own affairs, and not try to advise the trustees as to their authority on this matter."

Meanwhile, Santa Ana's city attorney, while openly questioning the constitutionality of demolishing the enclave, shrugged and said, "Do it, burn these buildings up and take the consequences."

The final okay came from Orange County District Attorney Horace C. Head, son of a Ku Klux Klan member who helped Orange County secede from LA County. He reassured the council that no criminal charges would be filed. "Well, gentleman," Head told them with a smile, "[any complainers] would have to come to me for warrants, and I don't think that you need fear any criminal suit."

In less than 48 hours, Santa Ana officials had accomplished what had been discussed for years.

Although the council tried to keep its decision quiet, word quickly got around town, leading to the massive crowds that saw Chinatown in flames that night. There wasn't much to eradicate by then: four houses, a store, the barn and the vegetable garden. The fire "was as picturesque an event as could be imagined," the *Times* cooed. Firemen arrived on the scene to protect City Hall from damage; city officials clubbed to death the cats, dogs and chickens the Chinese kept that tried to run away.

Willie Ching Wing, a prominent member of Los Angeles' Chinatown, arrived in Santa Ana after the fire started. The quarantined Chinese had let him know about their troubles, and Wing initially told the *Times* that "he understood [the fire] was being done by people who wanted to drive his countrymen out of the city." He found his countrymen hungry and shivering, huddled in one tent to keep warm in the pounding rain; the city had to move them to Salvation Army barracks and finally feed them. Ye was left behind.

Wing returned to LA, reassured by the promises of city leaders that the exiles would be compensated for their losses and be given lodging. He told the *Evening Blade* before departing that "everybody here has treated the China boys well." But he'd been had. The *Times* reported the following day that Ye "was left to die as best he may," with the sick man complaining his medicine "was all gone." While



ST. LOUIS DISPATCH, 1898

Ye's compatriots remained in the Salvation Army barracks, council members decided that not only would they not get a settlement or new homes, but also they had to leave the city immediately.

Word of this got back to Wing, who came back to Santa Ana on June 4 with a representative from the Los Angeles Chinese Chamber of Commerce to investigate. Two days later, they brought along Dr. Ralph Williams, a dermatologist tasked with investigating Ye's condition. The three went to Santa Ana City Hall, demanding an explanation from Burlew.

But by the time Santa Ana officials took them to the tent, Ye was dead. Burlew said he had last seen him the previous afternoon, but that a guard was supposed to monitor him at all times and "why [the guard] failed to notice his death" would be investigated; it never was. Burlew did an autopsy along with other Santa Ana doctors and concluded that Ye did, in fact, die of leprosy.

Newspapers initially reported that Williams agreed with Burlew's diagnosis. But in an extraordinary interview with the *Los Angeles Examiner*, the doctor not only stated he felt Ye didn't have the disease,

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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BURN, CHINATOWN, BURN

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but he also blasted Santa Ana officials for the measures they took against the sick man. “What the man died of I don’t know, for I did not see him before death,” Williams said. “I can’t believe that a man could die of leprosy without showing any of the ordinary signs of the disease.”

The comments so angered Burlew and city officials that they lodged a complaint against him with the Southern California Medical Association, demanding censure. What, if any, follow-up happened is lost to the proverbial dustbins. But this much is certain: There is no death certificate for Ye, and his burial plot is unknown. In August 1906, Burlew sent a letter to the *Southern California Practitioner*, the trade magazine for doctors in Southern California, to try to clear his name. “It was claimed by Los Angeles Chinamen, backed by their Los Angeles American medical advisers, that the case was

not one of leprosy and that an injustice was being done the Chinks, through the ignorance of Santa Ana’s physicians,” Burlew wrote. He admitted that Ye’s immediate cause of death wasn’t leprosy, but rather pneumonia. But Burlew stood by his diagnosis. He went on to become a pioneering doctor in Orange County, the first local surgeon to be made a fellow of the American College of Physicians and Surgeons; the Burlew Medical Library and Health Resource Center at St. Joseph Hospital of Orange is named after him.

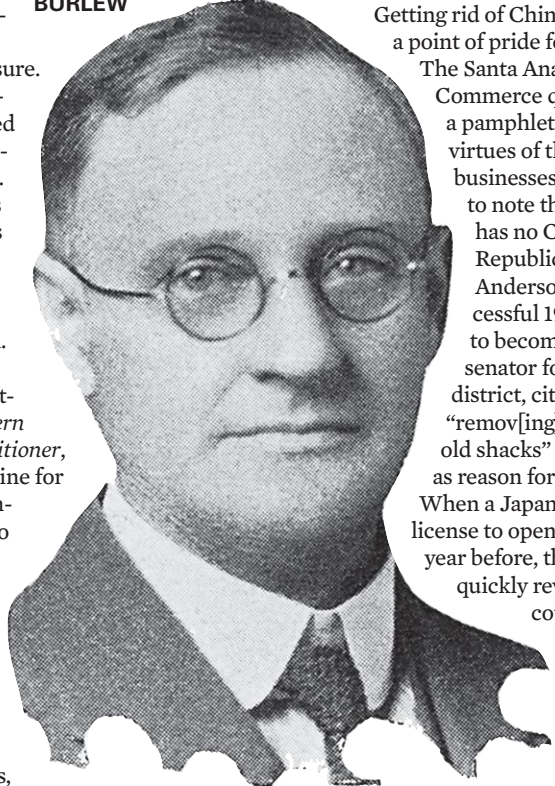
Although Ye was dead, Wing wasn’t done. The *Times* reported that the Chinese counted their losses at \$1,562.55, a figure the paper mocked on June 8 by opining their “entire possessions could not amount to a third of this sum.” The city countered with \$100, to be split among the seven survivors; Wing told them to refuse the offer and instead sue, using Williams’ findings to show that Santa Ana “acted without warrant in ordering” Chinatown burned. They never did, and they never lived in downtown Santa Ana again, leaving for the outskirts of the city or other Chinatowns in Orange County until those places were also destroyed. The last Chinese in Santa Ana, Lee You, left the

city in 1923, returning to his homeland. Almost a year after the burning of Chinatown, Shaffer wrote to the council. The landlord had never been paid for its sacking and demanded \$1,200 in lost rent. The city fathers openly laughed—a former member said the city wasn’t “liable for a copper center,” while the mayor at the time, Arthur J. McFadden, said they “need not rush into” paying Shaffer anything. It wasn’t until 1910 that the council responded to Shaffer—the city clerk wrote her a letter stating that her “claim is outlawed, and we are prohibited from paying it.”

Getting rid of Chinatown became a point of pride for all residents. The Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce quickly put out a pamphlet extolling the virtues of the town for businesses, making sure to note that “Santa Ana has no Chinatown.” Republican John N. Anderson, in his successful 1912 campaign to become a state senator for the 39th district, cited his work “remov[ing] several of the old shacks” of Chinatown as reason for voting him in. When a Japanese man got a license to open a laundry the year before, the City Council quickly revoked it; one council member declared, “This is a white man’s town,” while former District Attorney Head told the council “that if the city revokes the license, the Jap will not go to court.” Why? The burning of Chinatown.

Years after the death of Wong Woh Ye, county health officials dealt with another Asian leper case in a different manner. In July 1914, they found a 32-year-old Japanese man with the last name Saki in Villa Park. While isolating him in the same manner that Santa Ana officials did with Ye, they also made sure to feed, clothe and treat him. Saki escaped four months later, eventually living among Japanese in El Modena until getting caught by health officials in June 1915. The houses of the Japanese weren’t burned, and the county arranged a cottage for Saki, complete with running water and gas.

“Leprosy is not a contagious disease,” Dr. Harry Zaiser told the *Santa Ana Register*. “Leprosy is only transmittable through actual blood-to-blood contact.” While never attracting national attention, Santa Ana’s Chinatown attack loomed over the city for decades to come. “Not too many Chinese moved here because they still knew the history about why they burned up the town,”



ORANGE COUNTY MEDICAL HISTORY, 1921

said Fred Lau, in a 1984 interview with the Center for Oral and Public History (COPH) at Cal State Fullerton. In the late 1940s, Lau was one of the first Chinese to return to the city. “They did not want to be around here.”

“It was done maliciously and with malice aforethought,” admitted McFadden, the mayor who had refused to pay Chinatown’s landlord for her losses, to COPH interviewers in 1970. “[City leaders] wanted to get rid of Chinatown, and they just deliberately burned it down.”

But he felt no guilt—it had to happen. “The town had grown to the point where it practically surrounded that neighborhood,” McFadden added, “and it wasn’t a good idea to have a Chinatown in that situation.”

For years after the burning, the *Register* wistfully recalled the area every Chinese New Year. In 1922, it noted that “weird Oriental spirits” might haunt the staging of a Chinese play held at the Temple Theater—built on the very grounds of Chinatown. There, the paper recalled, “stood the establish-

ments of Chuck, the vegetable man, and Dock Yick [Sing], the dispenser of Chinese medicines. Next door, the establishment of Kee Kee attracted the gamblers. Their ghosts, mayhap, will

as the years passed. Tedford said the Chinese were given furnished homes in the wake of Chinatown’s ruin. Swaner wrote in his accounts that Williams didn’t dispute Burlew’s leprosy

reported. In his account, Sleeper took to making up dialogue wholesale and cracked jokes about newspapers getting Ye’s name “Wong.”

Today, what was Santa Ana’s Chinatown is hipster lofts and the parking lot behind the DGWB ad agency, which occupies the old City Hall (built in the 1930s, it replaced the City Hall that originally stood next to Chinatown). No marker stands anywhere in the area to commemorate its existence.

Perhaps the best summation of Santa Ana’s attitude was in a 1984 COPH interview with Lucy Lockett. The former schoolteacher was 13 years old at the time of Chinatown’s demise, and she fondly remembered the vegetable carts and laundry men that served the city during her childhood. Nevertheless, she insisted, “They all had to go. [Burning Chinatown] was a good thing to clear up the area.”

“Couldn’t get away with that now,” her interviewer responded. “No,” Lockett replied. And then she laughed.

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attend [the play] . . . to see that [it] is done in true Oriental manner.”

Local historians romanticized the story to lessen the reality of the deed

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Comedian Mike Epps made a household name for himself landing the role as Chris Tucker's replacement in *Next Friday* and *Friday After Next*. But his raw, caustic standup routines showcasing his biting racial commentary have kept him a hot ticket. If you enjoy at-the-limit offensive comedy, then you probably already love Mike Epps. Though his comedy stylings have taken him down the road of mainstream success, he has a potential game-changer in the works: the much anticipated Richard Pryor biopic, for which he nailed the leading role. Even though Nick Cannon, Marlon Wayans and Terrence Howard were all whispered to be considered for the part, Epps won out. And guess who is going to play Pryor's abusive grandmother. Oprah Winfrey! Epps performs this weekend at the Irvine Improv—catch him now before he graduates to A-List status.

Mike Epps at the Irvine Improv, 71 Fortune Dr., Irvine, (949) 854-5455; www.improv.com. 8 & 10 p.m.; also Sat. \$35-\$50. 21+. —ERIN DEWITT

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Over the past year, Oakland's G-Eazy cemented himself as one of the more interesting up-and-coming rappers. Blending the Bay Area's progressive hip-hop (he cites Mac Dre as a major influence) with the Southern rap he picked up while attending college in New Orleans, G-Eazy's star has been steadily rising since he opened for Lil Wayne in 2013. Last June, the 25-year-old released *These Things Happen*, his major-label debut and third full-length, which flew up the charts, landing at a career-best No. 3 on the Billboard 200. Between his viral videos and catchy songs, watch G-Eazy soar even higher in the very near future.

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sat/01/03

[CONCERT]

If This House Is A-Rockin' . . .

Wand, Lovely Bad Things, Endless Bummer

The multi-instrumentalists flanking Derek Janzen in British Columbia's ethereal Wand layer drum machines, omnichord, guitar and synthesizers to create an eerily calm sound that balances beauty and intrigue—their music transcends the trendy dream pop label and goes into prog pop territory. But for something completely different, OC's own Lovely Bad Things play garage punk tunes with an infectious energy that's impossible to dislike. They've become adored throughout the country since their breakout show at the 2012 Primavera Sound Festival in Barcelona, which set them apart as the loud youthquakers of our generation. And Los Angeles threesome Endless Bummer are a fervent explosion of jangly guitar and surf-infused punk rock that's truly reflective of the best of LA punk. Tonight seems like the right time to break out that leather jacket.

Wand with Lovely Bad Things and Endless Bummer at the Glass House, 200 W. Second St., Pomona, (877) 435-9849; www.theglasshouse.us. 7 p.m. \$10-\$12. All ages. —AIMEE MURILLO

[FILM]

*WELLY, WELLY, WELL

A Clockwork Orange

Stanley Kubrick's 1971 envisioning of novelist Anthony Burgess' satire of a dystopian future in which youth crime runs rampant is one of the vilest, most gorgeous achievements in cinematic history. Filled with rape, brutality, murder and torture, *A Clockwork Orange* was highly controversial at the time, but Kubrick was never one to worry about audiences who can't take a punch. Or a pummel. Or a gang rape. Nominated for Best Picture and making 10 times its budget back at the box office, this examination of extreme psychological rehabilitation and its inherent hypocrisy became an immediate classic, offering viewers a demented, gorgeously shot look into a future that all too often seems familiar. A haunting and inspired soundtrack by famed trans composer Wendy Carlos completes this nightmare vision of ecstasy and elation.

A Clockwork Orange at Regency South Coast Village, 1561 W. Sunflower Ave., Santa Ana, (714) 557-5701; www.regencymovies.com. 7:30 p.m. \$8. —SR DAVIES

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sun/01/04

[THEATER]

* TIES THAT BIND

The Whipping Man

Start the 2015 theater season off with a wallop. South Coast Repertory begins the year with *The Whipping Man*, a "powerful and haunting" piece written by Matthew Lopez. Set in the spring of 1865, just after the end of the Civil War, we meet a wounded Jewish soldier, Caleb, as he returns home to his family's abandoned and damaged plantation. The only two people there waiting for him are Simon and John, former slaves, now free men. As the three prepare for Passover, a landslide of racial issues, religious conflicts, societal ironies and house secrets emerge as they deal with their new way of life. Winner of the Outer Critics Circle Award, as well as the Lucille Lortel and an Obie, *The Whipping Man* is a deeply dramatic, soul-searching production—don't miss this chance to see it in our home county.

The Whipping Man at the South Coast Repertory, 655 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 708-5555; www.scr.org. 2 p.m. Through Jan. 25. \$44-\$51.

—ERIN DEWITT

[FILM]

Taking Over *Vikings: Life and Legend*

What most people know about Vikings is that they were badass motherfuckers. Guys with epic blond beards and helmets topped with great bloody horns, tearing through villages and basically just causing chaos. However, they were also diplomatic, cosmopolitan explorers who beat Columbus to North America and traveled throughout much of the world. The documentary *Vikings: Life and Legend*, narrated by Bettany Hughes, shares in exquisite detail the first Viking exhibition at the British Museum in more than three decades. Examine such findings as sculptures, art, coins, jewelry and more, owned by the Vikings but originating from many different countries and cultures. Most impressive, however, was the Vikings' boat mastery—their ships were both artistic and technical feats of extraordinary skill. As Hughes states, the Vikings' "ruthless appetite and zest for life has helped to shape the modern world today." Catch this morning screening and get inspired to go pillage something.

Vikings: Life and Legend at the Art Theatre, 2025 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 438-5435; www.arttheatrelongbeach.com. 11 a.m. \$8-\$11. —ERIN DEWITT

mon/01/05

[VOLUNTEER]

Do Your Part Monday Trail Clearing and Weeding

Do any of your New Year's resolutions include getting outside more? Volunteering with a nonprofit organization? Upping your environmental game? Well, if you get up early this Monday morning, you can knock out all three. The Reserve at Rancho Mission Viejo hosts an assortment of activities for outdoorsy types, including nature hikes, bird-watching walks and astronomy nights, but they also offer a host of volunteering opportunities. Help keep the reserve's pathways clean for all to enjoy by RSVPing for this trail clearing and weeding session. Bring sunscreen, a hat, gloves and comfortable shoes, and get down and dirty with the reserve staff. Do your part to keep the area gorgeous and healthy. Mother Earth will thank you.

Monday Trail Clearing and Weeding at the Richard and Donna O'Neill Conservancy, the Reserve at Rancho Mission Viejo, 28811 Ortega Hwy., San Juan Capistrano, (949) 489-9778; www.rmvreserve.org. 7:30 a.m. Free. —ERIN DEWITT

tue/01/06

[CONCERT]

* LIKE A FINE WINE Willie Nelson & Family

At an age when many of his peers are either long retired or dead, Willie Nelson keeps on chooglin'. The 81-year-old remains one of the country's most enduring faces, and at this point in his career, he's moved well into iconic status. He has teamed up with Snoop Dogg and also covered Pearl Jam—and last year, Nelson released *Band of Brothers*, a record that featured the most original songs he's written for an album since 1996. The result was favorable both critically and commercially, with the album landing atop country charts for the first time since 1986's *The Promiseland*. Even as his age climbs, Nelson's voice, lyrics and creativity remain as sharp as ever. Fortunately for his legions of fans, the outlaw country veteran shows no signs of slowing down.

Willie Nelson & Family at the City National Grove of Anaheim, 2200 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, (714) 712-2700; www.citynationalgroveofanaheim.com. 8 p.m. \$65.50-\$85.50. —DANIEL KOHN

wed/01/07

[CONCERT]

East Coast Sound The Dictators NYC

The Dictators were born in New York City in the early '70s, when the only time "punk" wasn't an insult was when it was part of a record review in a fanzine—and even then maybe it was still an insult! But the Dictators reveled in insults and in-jokes, and they loved gigantic riffs and make-it-sound-easy pop hooks, too. That made them the musical and philosophical opposite of arty contemporaries such as Television, as well as the immediate forerunners of the Ramones, who must've been inspired twice by the Dictators' pop sensibilities (or sentimentalities?) and enthusiastic goofiness. Since original members Scott and Andy aren't touring, "Dictators NYC" is the respectful tweak to the name. But it's still the first visit in years this handsome outfit has made to the West Coast. So, as the song says, "It's time to go under . . . to the thunder . . . of the Dictators!"

The Dictators NYC with Love Canal, PRV 13 and Motor 666 at Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292; www.alexbar.com. 8 p.m. \$15. 21+. —CHRIS ZIEGLER

[THEATER]

Perfectly Tuned Hershey Felder As Irving Berlin

Truly talented individuals are few and far between—but truly talented individuals who have lived film-worthy, remarkable lives are even more rare and deserving of celebration. In the case of Irving Berlin, known as one of the greatest songwriters ever, a personal celebration occurs with each sing-along to "God Bless America," "White Christmas" and "Cheek to Cheek," among others. Follow the genius' life and career from his humble upbringings in World War II Russia to Broadway and even the Academy Awards with this fantastic biographical and musical performance, *Hershey Felder As Irving Berlin*, now on the Laguna Playhouse stage.

Hershey Felder As Irving Berlin at the Laguna Playhouse, 606 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach, (949) 497-2787; www.lagunaplayhouse.com. 7:30 p.m. Through Feb. 8. \$41-\$56. —AMANDA PARSONS



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thu/01/08



[THEATER]



LOUDER THAN WORDS JOHN

Looks as if the Barclay Theatre is getting a little spicy this season! For this month's installment of National Theatre Live, in which performances are broadcast straight from the National Theatre in London to the big screen at the Barclay, audiences are treated to the dance and spoken-word story of *John*. Filled with heavy sexual themes, explicit language and "exten-

sive" male nudity (hello!), this gut-wrenching story follows a man coming to grips with his true identity through an obstacle course of drug abuse, crime and basic survival. Produced by DV8 Physical Theatre, a dance company that has won more than 50 awards on an international scale, *John* is a feast for the eyes and a sucker punch to the heart.

National Theatre Live: *John* at the Barclay Theatre, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine, (949) 854-4646; www.thebarclay.org. 7:15 p.m. \$17-\$22. —ERIN DEWITT



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THOSE NOODLES!

JENNIFER FEDRIZZI

Ramen Town Redux

Kitakata Ramen Ban Nai is the latest ramen giant to settle in Costa Mesa
BY EDWIN GOEI

Surely you've heard about the recent study that linked instant ramen to heart attacks and diabetes and that the chemical preservative tertiary-butylhydroquinone (TBHQ, a petroleum byproduct) is an often-used ingredient. This is why you should shun those freeze-dried packets of cheapness and convenience and instead eat more real ramen. I'm talking about real noodles in a made-from-scratch soup full of porkiness. And the city where you can get it has always been Costa Mesa. OC's Ramen Town is home not only to the venerable Santouka, with its rich-as-gravy broths; Ramen Yamadaya, with its equally weighty bowls of liquid bacon; but also to the indies Mentatsu and Ramen Zetton, which has a vegetarian ramen that's perhaps even better than the one made with pig.

Before it closed earlier this year, there used to be Kohryu, a cult favorite famous for bowls flecked with its signature deep-fried, charred bits of green onion. But we don't call it Ramen Town for nothing. Kitakata Ramen Ban Nai quickly took its spot in August—the first U.S. store of a chain that has about 60 locations in Japan.

Kitakata makes great noodles, perhaps the best of the entire bunch. The strands here are particularly bungee-like and elastic, with an imperfect crinkle that's wide in parts, flat in others, curly throughout—and sort of bloated if you compare it to the noodles at Santouka, Yamadaya and the rest. It's that way because Kitakata—partly named for the small town from whence it came—makes its noodles with a lot more

water than usual. The resulting product possesses a considerable chewiness, with a line weight just a few degrees below udon and a textural similarity to Chinese hand-pulled noodle.

Another distinctive feature of the bowls from this area is the broth, which is clear, not milky. When you sip Kitakata's soup, it'll be light—virtually spring water when compared to the rich sludge of the Hakata-style broths popular around these parts. This isn't to say it's not flavorful—it is. But you don't drink your sustenance here; you eat it in the form of those noodles and the thick, roasted pork belly slices of toro chashu layered on top.

This meltingly tender pork belly is another trademark of Kitakata-style ramen. The restaurant adorns all the bowls with the toro chashu in near-perfect squares. In its most expensive option, the chefs carpet the entire surface of the soup so completely with pig it blots out everything else beneath. Less pork-endowed but just as substantial is the green chili shio ramen, which has a tuft of shredded scallions piled on top, resembling Pebble Beach's Lone Cypress. The soup hides strips of red onions, Napa cabbage and thin slices of chile hiding near the bottom. It's not particularly spicy for the first few sips—but then you run into those chiles.

No matter which bowl you get, the portion sizes are generous. You still probably want to add an egg for an extra buck, though, and it's perfect. The yolk is flawless—halted at the state of matter between

liquid and solid. Also great: the deep-fried shishito peppers flavored with soy and the chicken karaage (greaseless, moist boulders of dark meat twice the size of a McNugget that are just the right amount of crispiness). If you're so inclined, Kitakata offers the same chicken over rice and also another rice bowl blanketed with more of that pork. But a sort of brick-red fried rice made with the house umami chile paste is a revelation.

The best thing you can order at Kitakata is the tsukemen, which highlights the noodles' mesmerizing qualities like no other dish. There are two options: cold, or kept hot in a big vat of its cooking water. In both, grab the strands with your chopsticks, dunk them into a smaller bowl of a reduced broth intensified by soy, and then slurp, slurp, slurp, disregarding all the noise your mouth is making.

Right now, the place can get extremely busy on weekend nights, and the frustratingly tiny parking lot it shares with Kitsch Bar and Manpuku fills up too quickly. Only after my third visit did I find out you're allowed to park in the overflow lot at the Newport-Mesa Unified offices behind the plaza—which is good because Ramen Town is in need of more Ramen Parking.

KITAKATA RAMEN BAN NAI

891 Baker St., Ste. B21, Costa Mesa, (714) 557-2947; ramenbannai.com. Open Wed.-Mon., 11 a.m.-2:45 p.m. & 5-9:45 p.m. Meal for two, \$15-\$30, food only. Beer and sake.

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Somehow, Lake Forest has become a focal point for African-American life in OC. A recording studio attracts the likes of Snoop Dogg; black churches dot the area. Kathryn McCullough was the first (and only) African-American mayor of an OC city. And since last summer, Lake Forest has hosted OC's only true soul-food buffet at the perfectly named Celebrity Soul Food Buffet. The place is massive—you can easily carve it into three distinct restaurants, with a whole section already cordoned off for banquets. But here is the best stand-alone buffet in the county, with three gigantic tables groaning with trays of Southern food. There's even a superfluous salad bar to the side—why bother with crappy roughage when all the veggies you need are next to all the fried catfish, dirty rice and neck bones (!) you can pile onto your plates for seconds and thirds?

I've traveled enough through the South to know a proper soul-food buffet, and Celebrity nails it. There's the requisite fried chicken, the DIY waffle station, the sweet tea with enough sugar to raise C & H's stock price. The mac and cheese congeals too quickly, it always seems to run out of chicken and dumplings when I'm there, and I wish there were more 'cue options, but everything else is perfect. Celebrity rotates more than 40 distinct entrées, few available anywhere else in OC, all noted with stickers above the sneeze guard save for the ones that read either "Daily Special" or—better yet—"Special Request." You know you're in a down-home place when cooked cabbage is on a tray, not too far from the steamed yams, both ready for eaters to ladle over the black-eyed peas and green beans for the best non-Indian vegetarian meal of your life.

And then there's the peach cobbler, rotated seemingly every hour, with a perfectly crisp crust and peaches from an orchard. African-American life is sadly hard to find in OC, but Celebrity makes up for it with heaps of food and good graces: When a clueless guy went in recently and asked the cashier what kind of food was sold there, she replied, "Souuuuuul food!" HELL, YA!

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LISA BLACK

What to do when you love a wedge salad but are not a big fan of blue cheese dressing, especially Bob's exceedingly gloopy version? If mayo-based dipping sauces creep you out, what do you dip your steamed artichoke leaves into? Thankfully, Costa Mesa-based Galeos makes many wonderful dressings, the best of which is the Miso Caesar. It solves any salad or veggie conundrums you may have with the bright tang of a vinaigrette but in a smooth and creamy pour. Made of organic, non-GMO ingredients, all varieties—from ranch to ginger and wasabi—have a delicious

EAT THIS NOW

»LISA BLACK

(and healthy!) koji miso base. But that Miso Caesar's . . . that's the one that'll make you forsake even your aunt's blue cheese dressing. So pry your previous salad dressing go-to from its crusty ring on your fridge door; toss it in the trash and welcome the Galeos.

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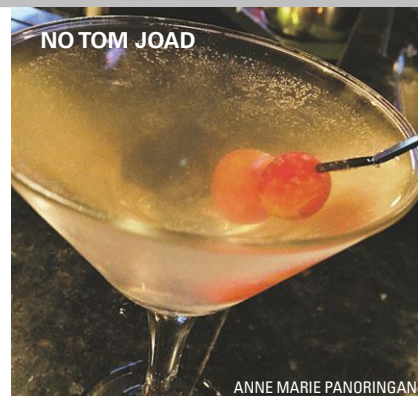
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DRINK OF THE WEEK

» ANNE MARIE PANORINGAN

Grapes of Wrath at the Melting Pot

You know that place you'd frequent after work? If you're by John Wayne Airport, it's probably Classic Q. Once upon a time, I would have said the Melting Pot. Instead of the most expensive DIY meal in the county (that wasn't shabu shabu), I'd score a deal at the bar—a salad, drink and cheese course for about half the cost. This is where my cocktail education started, where everything I sipped a decade ago had a pretty, candy hue—sorry, not sorry because I learned well. Nowadays, my visits there happen about once a year. Very little has changed, but there's something to be said for familiarity. December is the only month the Melting Pot serves both lunch and dinner, and it shows—the Friday I visited, couples overran the spot, fortysomethings sharing glasses of wine and flutes with rosy bubbles. Narrowly avoiding the Sour Patch 'tini and predictable lemon drop, I settled on a hybrid of sorts: the Grapes of Wrath.



ANNE MARIE PANORINGAN

THE DRINK

It features freshly muddled grapes in a base of Belvedere Vodka and St. Germain, with a pour of Matua, a Marlborough white. A dry, slightly bitter aftertaste beats any of its extra-sugary cohorts by a mile. Never thought I'd thank a Sauvignon Blanc for helping my taste buds, but there's a first for everything. . . .

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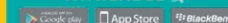
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Still Marching

Ava DuVernay's urgent *Selma* speaks to the now
BY STEPHANIE ZACHAREK

Describing Ava DuVernay's quietly remarkable *Selma* to a friend, I caught myself referring to the Civil Rights Era as a historical event, a thing of the past, and then backtracked. The killing of Michael Brown, Eric Garner and Tamir Rice at the hands of police officers—not to mention the Supreme Court's dismantling, in June 2013, of the Voting Rights Act, a quieter yet perhaps more insidious event—all indicate the Civil Rights Era is ongoing because it has to be. *Selma*, in addition to being a meticulously detailed historical drama, is the right movie for the moment: In telling the story of the three marches—from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama—led by Martin Luther King in 1965 as a protest against restrictions that prevented African-Americans from registering to vote, DuVernay has also opened a window of hope on the present. If change was painful then, we shouldn't expect it to be easy now.

Change always costs us something, and DuVernay—working from a script by Paul Webb—faces that truth unflinchingly. The film opens with King, played by David Oyelowo, fussing with the ascot he's supposed to wear to accept the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize; he complains to wife Coretta (Carmen Ejogo) that it's just too pretentious, that his friends back home would mock him for “living high on the hog.” But his mind is really on something much more pressing than the propriety of this length of silk, and at this point, DuVernay dramatizes a key event that haunts the speech he's about to give, a tragedy that had occurred a year earlier: A cluster of little girls descend a church stairwell, chattering about the best ways to get straight, beautiful hair. They're wearing dresses with short, bouffant skirts and gloves with lacy cuffs; they carry tiny Sunday purses barely big enough for a hankie and a few pennies.

The explosion that kills them is, in the hands of DuVernay and cinematographer Bradford Young, a slow-motion swirl of dust and splinters and shards of glass. We also get a glimpse of one small airborne patent-leather shoe. The violence of the moment may be too muted for some and too heartstring-plucking for others. But what else could she do with one of the most villainous and godless acts of the last half of the 20th century, the murder of four girls at the hands of white supremacists in a Birmingham church in 1963? DuVernay gets the moment as right as anyone could. If it knocks the wind out of you, that means you're still breathing.

With *Selma*, DuVernay has pulled off a tricky feat, a movie based on historical events that never feels dull, worthy or life-

less; it hangs together as a story and not just part of a lesson plan. The movie is at once intimate and grand in scope: An early scene shows Annie Lee Cooper (played by Oprah Winfrey), who would become a voting-rights activist, trying to register in her home county and being turned away, stymied by a blockade of absurd regulations. Another shows King in the Oval Office conferring with Lyndon B. Johnson (played by a superb Tom Wilkinson, who gets even the hunch of Johnson's shoulders just right), urging the president to push forward with the Voting Rights Act. LBJ, having succeeded the previous year in the gargantuan task of pushing the Civil Rights Act through Congress, drags his heels. Johnson knows how much he needs King politically, but he's not above using his power in devious ways: In one subtle and chilling scene, he gives FBI honcho J. Edgar Hoover (Dylan Baker, who manages to come off as both parched and oily) tacit permission to try to break up the King household as a way of undermining the movement.

LBJ eventually ended up on the right side of history, but King had to nudge him toward it. King also had to negotiate disputes between the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), two groups with similar goals but bitter differences about how to reach them. (Stephan James is marvelous as the young John Lewis, the SNCC activist who would become a Georgia congressman, now in office for 28 years and referred to by his colleagues as “the conscience of Congress.”)

Selma lays out the challenges faced by organizers and regular citizens alike in planning and executing the marches. On their first attempt to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge, they're run down and clubbed by Sheriff Jim Clark and a phalanx of policemen on horseback; the cops descend upon the peaceful marchers, many of them elderly, kicking and beating them with batons. DuVernay proves both discreet and vigorous in her orchestration of violence, emphasizing its horror without beating the audience up.

She's similarly judicious in depicting the shooting death of activist Jimmie Lee Jackson (Keith Stanfield), again at the hands of policemen, and the beating death of James Reeb (Jeremy Strong), the minister who came down from Boston to join the march and was killed by white supremacists. There's nothing graphic in *Selma*, but you feel the weight of every act.

DuVernay—whose previous features include the 2012 drama *Middle of*



STILL LIKED HIM BETTER
ON *THE BOONDOCKS*

ATSUSHI NISHIJIMA

Nowhere—has put together an exceptionally fine ensembles of actors, among them Common (as SCLC activist James Bevel), Tessa Thompson (as, in FBI parlance, “female agitator” Diane Nash) and Tim Roth (who makes a wheedling, weaselly George Wallace). Ejogo brings fine, gradient shading to the role of Coretta Scott King. More than just a put-upon wife, she's a woman who looks at her husband every day—a great man and a flawed human being—and wonders when, not if, he's going to be taken away from her.

As King, Oyelowo is the movie's grave but radiant center. DuVernay isn't afraid to tangle with some of the thornier issues of King's legacy: Though he advocated only peaceful protest, he was canny enough to know that provoking his opponents into violence was the surest way to draw attention to the cause. Oyelowo plays King as a man who knew what he was risking every day—not just his own life, but also the lives of others. In one of the movie's quietest,

most piercing moments, he calls a friend in the middle of the night. She rolls out of bed to answer the phone. “I just need to hear the Lord's voice,” King tells the woman, who turns out to be Mahalia Jackson (played by Ledisi Young). She obliges, with an impromptu version of “Take My Hand, Precious Lord.” *Selma* shows King in moments of weakness and triumph, and though it stops well short of portraying him as saintly, he's still a hero for our time. In the past year, as Americans, we've had too many occasions to look at ourselves and realize we don't know who we are anymore. *Selma* reminds us we're capable of better.

SELMA

was directed by Ava DuVernay; written by Paul Webb; and stars David Oyelowo, Tom Wilkinson, Cuba Gooding Jr., Alessandro Nivola, Giovanni Ribisi, Common, Carmen Ejogo, Lorraine Toussaint, Tim Roth, Oprah Winfrey, Stephan James, Andre Holland and Tessa Thompson.

film guide»

OPENING

SELMA See "Still Marching," page 23.

ONGOING

ANNIE Every version of *Annie* since the Broadway original has aimed younger and younger. John Huston's 1982 movie cut the child-confounding songs "We'd Like to Thank You, Herbert Hoover" and "New Deal for Christmas," and added two ditties about Annie's dog. This new flick scraps the 1933 setting altogether and plops Annie into contemporary Harlem, a bodega playground. Now, in "You're Never Fully Dressed Without a Smile," your clothes aren't "Beau Brummell-y," but "Chanel, Gucci." Producers Jay-Z and Will and Jada Pinkett Smith must have beamed when they discovered that rhyme—and, to be fair, their three children are fashion-forward. There's a sense that neither they nor director Will Gluck know what normal kids—the kind they need to buy tickets to *Annie*—think is cool. Instead, once again this is an Annie for adults, only now the spin is less "Remember the social-welfare lessons of the Great Depression?" and more "Hey, rich people are nice, too." This *Annie* is so modern that the girl's benefactor, Will Stacks (Jamie Foxx), is a telecommunications baron running for mayor. It presumes that children care a great deal about cellphone towers, political campaigns, and Twitter. Still, Quvenzhané Wallis, as Annie, is raw, charismatic, alive, and unpredictable: In her biggest solo number, every time Gluck cuts to Annie singing on a stage, it's a crapshoot whether she'll be preening like Billie Holiday or rocking jerkily side to side like Chuck E. Cheese. In short, she's a child. The question is if this musical has any genuine interest in one. **(PG)** Amy Nicholson. *Countywide*.

BIG HERO 6 Imagine if nerdy Clark Kent didn't have to remove his glasses and pocket protector to save the world. Then imagine him as fat and sweet as a marshmallow. Meet *Big Hero 6*'s Baymax, Disney's new cuddly champion: a waddling, inflatable health care companion who can sense your pulse, diagnose disease, and, if reprogrammed, kill. Our setting is San Fransokyo, a hybrid of California and Japan where everyone loves tech gadgets and sushi. (Whether the city is fictitious or simply the near future is up for debate.) Boy wonder Hiro (Ryan Potter), a 14-year-old orphan, joins his college-age older brother, Tadashi (Daniel Henney), in a state-of-the-art laboratory inventing marvels with other young geniuses: Go Go (Jamie Chung), a hellion with a magnetic bike;

Wasabi, a geek who loves lasers; and Honey Lemon (Genesis Rodriguez), a girlie girl who knows her way around chemicals. To make engineers more *awesome*, the movie upgrades the gang into superheroes, which scrambles the message. An arsonist destroys Hiro's (admittedly not very long) life's work and accidentally offs Tadashi. Hiro asks his geek friends to set things right—and trains Baymax, his brother's kindly robot, with punches and kicks scanned from kung fu movies. *Big Hero 6* veers from chipper to noisy to dark stretches where it grapples with adult-sized grief. Hiro isn't just a sweet moppet: He's full of rage and despair and ego. He needs Baymax to be his family, which means training him to fist-bump, and groaning when the robot runs out of battery and acts like a stumbling, slurring drunk—a moment that could have kids later suspiciously checking their own parents for a plug. **(PG)** Amy Nicholson. *Countywide*.

EXODUS: GODS AND KINGS Flip open your Bibles to Numbers 12:3 to find the first inaccuracy in Ridley Scott's *Exodus: Gods and Kings*. "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth," sayeth the Good Book of our hero, played by Christian Bale, an actor of hauteur even when saddled with a combover and potbelly. Bale's Moses is a sword-slashing general who strides around ancient Egypt like he owns the place, which, as the adopted son of the Pharaoh, he does, at first. This guy is fated to lead a slave uprising? The only way Bale's Moses could be the humblest man alive is if the rest of the planet were killed. The pleasures in *Exodus* are tactile: the heavy turquoise bridles worn by the villainous Ramses II (Joel Edgerton), the matching blue-and-white headdresses of his soldiers as they dominate the Hebrew slave quarters like cotton stormtroopers, the zebra and tiger skins he uses as carpet, and the unearthly pink crab he munches on for dinner. We can hear the luxury: Even in chaotic battle scenes, you can discern every individual clink of the scaly gold armor. But Scott, either from fear or distraction, has no take on what this story might mean. A budget this big ensures he's gotta sell tickets to Bible-thumpers and spectacle-loving heathens alike. Yet he can't decide if making rivers run with blood is heroic or horrific—you sense he'd rather make *Gladiator II: Attack of the Frogs*. Thanks to a distracting father versus son versus favored adopted son plotline, he essentially has. **(PG-13)** Amy Nicholson. *Countywide*.

THE HOBBIT: THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES Reviewing any chunk of Peter Jackson's Tolkien-flavored fantasy-combat-simulation project is

like reviewing some holiday party or a possibly obligatory family get-together. You know whether you're going, you know who you'll see there, and you know that you'll either grit through it and be glad when it's over, or you'll lose yourself in it and miss the ritual when it's gone. Either way, consider this: Once the final version of *The Battle of the Five Armies* hits Blu-ray, Jackson's full series will take almost a full day of your life to get through. And yet, even here, at the end of all things Middle-earth, the filmmaking and world-crafting and orc-decapitations are still brash and vigorous, still lavish, rousing, grating, wearying, and hilarious, both intentionally and un-. When orc and dwarf spill through fog onto a silvery frozen lake, and then in that roller-rink moonscape gorgeousness keep their grudge match going both above and under the ice, you may carp that it's all just *too much*. But it's hard not to marvel at just how *much* too-much Jackson has whipped up—and how much of it was inspired. The film builds to a series of boss battles against scarred and gum-fleshed orc chiefs Tolkien didn't even bother putting in the book. They're individually spectacular, staged with the full Jackson invention and brio—he's as good at this stuff as anyone in the history of movies. But they just keep coming, like frozen yogurt from a self-serve spigot: a kid didn't bother turning off, more and more in a relentless gush. *The Hobbit* is less a trilogy than it is a heaping mound of sugary goo. **(PG-13)** Alan Scherstuhl. *Countywide*.

INTERSTELLAR There's so much space in Christopher Nolan's nearly three-hour intergalactic extravaganza *Interstellar* that there's almost no room for people. This is a gigantosaurus movie entertainment, set partly in outer space and partly in a futuristic dustbowl America where humans are in danger of dying out, and Nolan—who co-wrote the script with his brother, Jonathan—has front-loaded it with big themes and even bigger visuals. *Interstellar* is supposedly all about what it means to be human, but it's supersized in case we really are so out of touch with being human that we need to have everything blown up IMAX-big. "We used to look up at the sky and wonder at our place in the stars," says Cooper, Matthew McConaughey's farmer-astronaut-dreamer in one of his many, many proclamations about life, family, and the cosmos. "Now we just look down and worry about our place in the dirt." But even the dirt in *Interstellar* looks spectacularly art-directed. Launched into a wormhole to scout new worlds for possible human habitation, Cooper and his colleagues encounter frozen worlds and watery ones, and the dangers they face are both existential and specific. The universe Nolan has invented for them is vast, awe-inspiring, and terrifying. But if Nolan is so godlike, you'd think he'd be better with actors. They don't stand a shooting star's chance in *Interstellar*. Anne Hathaway's big moment—her only moment, really—is a quavery speech about true love. In what should be McConaughey's most moving scene—he faces the reality that his children have aged by 23 years, while he's only a few hours older—we can see McConaughey working the strings. **(PG-13)** Stephanie Zacharek. *Countywide*.

INTO THE WOODS No matter how it per-

forms in theaters, Stephen Sondheim's and James Lapine's dark, glorious, and supremely messy fairytale mash-up musical/therapy session is now forever a pop-culture curio that unwary kids will stumble upon to their bafflement and betterment. The princess-party punchbowl has forever been spiked. Here's wicked stepsisters who hack off toes to cram their feet into Cinderella's slippers. And here's a Cinderella (Anna Kendrick) whose flock of bird companions occasionally peck out her enemies' eyes. Better still: Sumptuously gowned, Cinderella flees prince and ball three nights running for reasons she doesn't understand herself until much later, after she has won everything any princess-minded tween has ever ached for—come to find out, the wishing beats the hell out of the having. The wishing for a big-screen Into the Woods might be best the reality, too, despite Kendrick's glittering turn and the wonders of Sondheim's brittle-witty score, which is mostly intact. Onstage, *Into the Woods* is an exhausting triumph—it's the show whose first half your relatives adore, and whose second, when Grimm and Freud met Pirandello, leaves them restless and discomfited. Onscreen, exhaustion sets in much earlier. *Into the Woods* is all about archetypes running hither and thither, questing and belting, their stories glancing against each other in that fairytale space of the title. In a live performance, we can observe multiple stories at once, the actors occupying different corpses—we're invited to savor the correspondences. In the movie, director Rob Marshall simply cuts from one tale to the next, isolating his actors. There's little sense that the fairytale space is a shared one—it's just a bunch of noisy incident transpiring in unrelated treestands. **(PG)** Alan Scherstuhl. *Countywide*.

PENGUINS OF MADAGASCAR

Talking-animal spy comedy *Penguins of Madagascar*, a spin-off of talking-animal prison-break comedy *Madagascar* and its sequels, plays like a sampler of Dreamworks Animation's worst creative impulses: sugar-rush pacing, pandering meta-gags, and a slick, flavorless animation style. These pervasive shortcomings make it impossible to enjoy this desperate-to-please film's two most distinctive assets: voice actors John Malkovich's and Benedict Cumberbatch's comically uninged performances as the film's wet-blanket antagonists. Malkovich's Octavius Brine, a malevolent octopus, and Cumberbatch's Classified, an uptight wolf-cum-superspy, serve as comic foils for the hyperactive, happy-go-lucky penguin protagonists: bossy Skipper (Tom McGrath), level-headed Kowalski (Chris Miller), dimwitted Rico (Conrad Vernon), and nervous-nelly Private (Christopher Knights). Following these devil-may-care penguins' manic attempts to help Classified stop Brine from kidnapping penguins around the world is like being trapped on a runaway wooden roller coaster for 95 minutes. First Skipper and his group binge on junk food at Fort Knox. Then they flee from evil octopi in a Venetian gondola race. Then they crash-land in Hong Kong, and try to stop Brine from kidnapping local zoo penguins. Skipper's gang stumble around and needle both Classified and Brine with their monotonous quirks, like McGrath's fine-in-small-doses Captain Kirk-esque

inflection and Knights' squeaky-toy stammer. It all just makes you want to root for the exasperated bad guys. **(PG)** Simon Abrams. *Countywide*.

TOP FIVE Chris Rock couldn't have planned it this way, but his exuberant and wondrous comedy *Top Five*, opening at just the right time, is like an airdrop of candy over a country shaken by Ferguson and the Eric Garner grand jury decision. That's not to say Rock glosses over serious issues, or, for that matter, that he hits them hard. But somehow *Top Five* has its finger on the pulse of *right now*, not just in terms of race in America—but in terms of how we're all trying to do the best we can, with no jobs, a buttload of creeps in Congress, and dashed hopes of anything coming close to equality or fairness. The story of a hugely successful comedian and actor—played by Rock himself—who turns away from comedy because he just doesn't "feel funny anymore," *Top Five* reminds us that as often as comedy fails, sometimes it's our best hope for resuscitation. Rock's Andre Allen has just released a historical drama about the Haitian Revolution (it's called *Uprize*), and he's about to tie the knot with a reality-TV star, Gabrielle Union's Erica. He wanders New York with a Times reporter (Rosario Dawson), walking and talking, laughing and bickering, trying to suss out which elements of their conversation are typical star-vs.-journalist BS and which might actually be some kind of truth. *Top Five* moves fast and almost never lets up. Its jokes unfold in complex layers: They're rarely just race-related, or political, or connected to the universal needs and wants of human beings—often they're all three at once. Seeing it at the end of a crap week, I suddenly felt I could breathe again. **(R)** Stephanie Zacharek. *Countywide*.

UNBROKEN *Unbroken* is the most literal film of the year—it's wholly the tale of a victim (Louis Zamperini, played by Jack O'Connell) who won't crack. Make that three films—it plays like several shorts edited end-to-end. The first is a cheery Dust Bowl tale of an immigrant boy made good, a kiddie thug (C.J. Valleroy plays young Louis) who sneaks booze into milk bottles and goes home to a dear mama who makes gnocchi from scratch and prays for his soul. Louis gets his life on track only when he takes up running; eventually he races the fastest lap at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. The second and third acts are nightmares. On a routine rescue mission, Louis' plane crashes into the ocean, killing eight of the 11 men aboard. We gasp when we see his leg pinned under fuselage—will he ever race again? Very quickly, it's clear that winning a gold medal is the least of his problems. Director Angelina Jolie settles into the survivors' raft for a long stretch at sea where we feel every creak and breeze. It gets worse when the boys are scooped up by the Japanese. What follows is unceasing torture, onscreen and vicariously in the theater. At the hands of pretty-boy war criminal Mutsuhiro Watanabe (Takamasa Ishihara), the Americans are beaten and beaten and beaten. By then, the life raft is leagues away, the marmalade childhood farther still. But we're no closer to figuring out the point of *Unbroken*, other than to marvel at Louis' strength. **(PG-13)** Amy Nicholson. *Countywide*.

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Behold your 2015 theater preview

BY JOEL BEERS

An overview of local theater in 2015 should give people who place value in producing plays that aren't tried and tired some measure of satisfaction. About a dozen emerging American playwrights will see productions on local stages this year—and, for the first time in a loooooong time, not all those productions are at the one theater that is a leading force at doing just that: South Coast Repertory.

That's a good thing. And even those theaters that aren't staging new or unfamiliar work have something interesting in store. So here's a brief overview of some of the most interesting:

The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby. This makes the cut because it's a new adaptation of Charles Dickens' 1839 novel, courtesy of Joe Parrish, and who knew Dickens wrote anything other than *A Christmas Carol*? Stagedoor Repertory, 1045 N. Armando St., Anaheim, (714) 630-7378; www.stagedoorrep.org. Jan. 17-Feb. 7.

Tristan & Yseult. Two world premieres commissioned by South Coast Repertory and the January production of the Obie Award-winning *The Whipping Man* are three reasons to care about the second half of the theater's season, but the highlight may be this import courtesy of Kneehigh, a British-based company that has earned international acclaim for its highly visual aesthetic style. South Coast Repertory, 655 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 708-5555; www.scr.org. Jan. 23-Feb. 22.

Roger Guenveur Smith: Rodney King. A riveting performer and passionate writer, Smith's one-man show about King should be a highlight of the Off Center Festival. Segerstrom Center for the Performing Arts, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 556-2787; www.scfta.org. Jan. 27-30.

Loch Ness, a Musical. Plays by Amy Herzog and Samuel D. Hunter, two of the most praised emerging playwrights in America, are definite highlights, but the Chance Theater's track record for staging musicals the past few years means this could be a gas. It's a world premiere courtesy of Marshall Paillet and A.D. Penedo about an elusive reptilian creature that everyone knows exists. Chance Theater, 5522 E.

La Palma Ave., Anaheim, (714) 777-3033; www.chancetheater.org. Jan. 30-March 1.

Bonnie and Clyde. If the Powers That Be could spin the French Revolution into the cash cow *Les Misérables*, why can't they do the same with this duo? Their story has it all: passion, romance, wealth redistribution, heroic folk anti-heroes, bumbling law enforcement—all set against the mad-cap hilarity of the Great Depression! Then again, this show only lasted four weeks on



RICHARD TERMINE

Broadway, and the guy behind it, Frank Wildhorn, is responsible for such crap as *Jekyll & Hyde* and, hands-down the worst musical these jaded eyes have ever seen, *The Civil War*, so there is that. . . . Costa Mesa Playhouse, 661 Hamilton St., Costa Mesa, (949) 650-5269; www.costamesaplayhouse.org. Feb. 6-March 8.

Slings & Arrows: Shakespeare's Hamlet Re-imagined. The Monkey Wrench Collective resurfaces with this experimental, deconstructed take on the Bard. Audience members are split into groups that see various scenes from the play re-enacted in various rooms of the stately estate. Casa Romantica, 415 Avenida Granada, San Clemente, (949) 498-2139; www.casaromantica.org. April 10-18.

Wolves. Yet another relatively under-the-radar playwright, Steve Yockey, wrote this dark spin on a modern Little Red Riding

Hood-like scenario. Theatre Out, 402 W. Fourth St., Santa Ana, (714) 220-7069; www.theatreout.com. Opens April 3.

Out of Orbit. The 2014 winner of the prestigious Stanley Drama Award, this is, according to the company's website, the first full-fledged production of Jennifer Maisel's heady-sounding play about a JPL scientist who's living on Mars time and her underachieving daughter, who falls for some strange dude via the Internet.

California Repertory Theatre, 1126 Queens Hwy., Long Beach, (562) 985-4500; www.calrep.org. April 17-May 9.

Avenue Q. Sesame Street meets Generation X angst in this incredibly successful musical, which is 23rd on the list of longest-running Broadway shows and has been done just about everywhere since it opened in 2002. Maverick Theater, 110 E. Walnut, Fullerton, (714) 526-7070; www.mavericktheater.com. June 5-July 11.

Green Man. Eleven plays are on the calendar at Orange County's longest continuing storefront, including ones by contemporary playwrights Sarah Ruhl, Wendy MacLeod, Jason Wells, Amy and David Sedaris, and even a local writer with the bitchen name Hero Carlisle. All are welcome additions to a theater scene that, all too often, is pretty goddamn rote. One of the most interesting, *Green Man*, comes from the fecund mind of Jim Knable,

a Sacramento-based musician and writer who is a certifiable trip (among many reasons, he claims to be the founder of the Pseudo-Symbolist movement). This play, about "love, loss and gargoyles," includes music from Knable as well as a naked guy painted green. STAGES theatre, 400 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 525-4484; www.stagesoc.org. June 26-Aug. 2.

Tarzan: The Stage Musical. This is on the list because it sounds like the kind of show that gives theater such a bad name. Yet 3D Theatricals does great work (though I'm currently boycotting it because its big-time LA press guy no longer gives comp tickets to the website Stage and Cinema because he feels the reviews are too harsh. Go grab a juice box and take a nap, you pussy). Plummer Auditorium, 201 E. Chapman Ave., Fullerton, (714) 626-3890; 3dtshows.com. July 11-July 26.

TRENDZILLA

»LP HASTINGS

Spring Fashion Preview

Though it isn't time to put away your winter coats just yet (more rain, please!), here's a preview of what's good (and bad) in Spring 2015. A few of these trends are recycled from last spring, but they're still bolder than what was deemed cool this past fall. While a select few women can actually pull these looks off (i.e., bone-thin models), don't fret if your body type doesn't work—as always, wear what you love.

Culottes: Have culottes ever been cool? The name just screams, "1960s mom!" Not the cool weed-smoking mom, but the one who's already birthed three children and wears culottes to a backyard barbecue. It's just one of those things women wear to impress other, "fashionable" women—because "Wear the culottes, babe," said no lover ever.

Shirtresses: Too stiff a fabric makes it resemble a shirt that didn't know when to stop, but breathable, fluid fabrics make a shirtdress very sensual. Look for a piece that's short and flirty or hits mid-calf and swings when you walk.

Kimono Coats: We've seen these around since Coachella. No doubt many people roll their eyes at the hipster accessory, but I've seen bangin' girls make it look cool. The key is to not go overboard with other hippie accessories and balance the feminine shape with rugged boots or a worn-in shirt.

Apron Look: This is just stupid. High-fashion brands including DKNY have models strutting the runway wearing a skirt with another, shorter skirt on top. It reminds me of the time I wore a plaid skirt over jeans—I was 9. The moral here being don't act like a grown-ass woman but still dress as if you're in elementary school.

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LOS ANGELES DE CHARLY:
LA ROCKOLA FAVES



UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Adíos, La Rockola

Remembering the sonideros, guaracheras, cumbias and *desmadre* of the best OC station you never listened to

BY GUSTAVO ARELLANO

Many media outlets reported this past November that Liberman Broadcasting was selling KHJ-AM 930 to a Catholic radio network. The station, of course, was a legendary frequency in Southern California during the 1960s and '70s, home to the mighty "Boss Radio" format that launched an army of famous LA DJs. Those November reports mentioned that history, with some noting that 930 had broadcast Spanish-language music since the 1990s under the nickname "La Ranchera," featuring nothing but classic corridos, norteñas and more Vicente Fernández than your mustache can ever handle.

A smaller amount of reporters noted that Liberman was moving La Ranchera to its FM station, Santa Ana-based KWIZ-FM 96.7. But only one newspaper, a trade website, mentioned the format it was replacing: "La Rockola," which AllAccess.com described as playing "regional Mexican" music.

The description, while technically true, is akin to saying a Packard is just a car. La Rockola was one of the most interesting local radio experiments in recent memory, one that essentially broadcast a stream of chatter and music you'd hear on a radio blasting from the windowsill of an apartment in Mexico City. This isn't overwriting on my part, but absolutely true: La Rockola took the sound of a very specific region, plugged it into the FM dial and turned it into a 24-hour *desmadre fiesta*, all from a run-down station on the Willowick Golf Course in Santa Ana.

The oldest continually operating Orange County-based radio station (since 1926, when it started as an AM signal),

KWIZ has played Spanish-language music since the late 1980s but only had the La Rockola format since the early 2000s. It arrived during an era when Mexican migration patterns to the city (statistically, the most Mexican big city *los Estados Unidos*) had moved on from the *michoacanos* and *zacatecanos* of a previous generation to people from central Mexico—Puebla, Hidalgo, Morelos, Tlaxcala, Veracruz and more. Most colorful among them were the *chilangos*—people from Mexico City. These people didn't care for the banda, conjunto norteño and Mexican pop that dominate Southern California Spanish-language stations; they had their own musical tastes, a dizzying array of folk, metal, electronic, tropical—one continuous *puro pinche pari*.

Liberman Broadcasting (the largest privately held Spanish-language radio chain in the United States) switched KWIZ's format from Mexican pop standards to La Rockola to match this need. Imagine an English-language station in Southern California only playing music for homesick Gothamites, from the Boss to George Gershwin to the Ramones, Jay Z and more—but only from there—and you get a sense of La Rockola's audacious, thrilling strategy.

It was the best OC radio station you never listened to, a sort of living, breathing anthropology course. Broadcasters spoke in the wisecracking, sing-song *chilango* argot; Saturdays were advertised as "*Sabados Distrito Federal*"—"Federal District Saturdays," a shoutout to Mexico City's official designation and a callback to a famous song of the same title extolling the megalopolis.

Best of all, listeners were subject to Mexico City's favorite genres, most not heard on any other radio station in the United States, let alone Southern California.

There were sonideros, DJs spinning tracks while adding sound effects and toasting friends and fans à la the sound systems of Jamaica, and groups such as Grupo Kual, which used synthesizers on everything from voices to accordions to even bass lines to spin some of the loopy dance music outside an EDM showcase. It wasn't good enough for La Rockola to play cumbias, the lingua franca dance form of Latin America originally from Colombia; La Rockola played variants from cumbia andina (Mexicans playing cumbias with such Andean instruments as charangos and multipiped flutes) to cumbia colombiana to cumbia stalwarts like Los Angeles de Charly. La Rockola played bachata before it became popular in Southern Californian clubs, even though OC has next-to-no Dominicans, as well as other Latin American dance rhythms including merengue, punta and vallenatos. It would play oldies, from Perez Prado to legendary salsa group La Sonora Santanera and classic rock *en español* songs such as "Fuiste a Acapulco" that only a *chilango* could love. It was the only radio station in the United States I've ever known to play rock urbano, a bluesy style of rock born from Mexico City and popular seemingly only there. And in a nod to the many Oaxacans and people from the state of Guerrero that also swarmed into SanTana during the 2000s, La Rockola even spun music from their region, from fast-paced *chilenas* to a weird genre involving brass instruments and a fiddle that even I can't figure out.

The station blasted seemingly everywhere in SanTana, from *loncheras* to cars idling on Bristol Street, from bars to households. Almost everything about the station pertained to the city—its ads, its jokes, its *sentido* (feeling). It made sense—KWIZ's frequency, while reaching into Los Angeles, begins to fade out around Koreatown to the north and Mid-Wilshire to the west, and it's nonexistent south of San Juan Capistrano. With such a localized audience, there was no reason to acknowledge anything besides SanTana and Mexico City.

Amazingly, La Rockola lasted about a decade, even though its ratings never amounted to much—its audience was the definition of niche, after all. But there wasn't even a chance for La Rockola's personalities to bid *adíos*—the switchover happened without any warning to listeners. On Nov. 13, La Rockola simply posted a Twitter message saying in Spanish, "Ladies and gentlemen, as you've already heard that the concept of La Rockola no longer exists, thank you for everything. The concept . . ."—leading to a Facebook post that was quickly deleted.

The new La Ranchera 96.7 is already gaining listeners, and there is something wonderful about being able to listen to ranchera legends such as Pedro Infante and José Alfredo Jiménez in FM for the first time in, well, ever. But the demise of La Rockola is yet another nail in the coffin to Southern California radio, once the nation's leader in pushing boundaries and formats, now reduced to the same group-think that has killed the industry. Hey, who says Mexicans don't assimilate?

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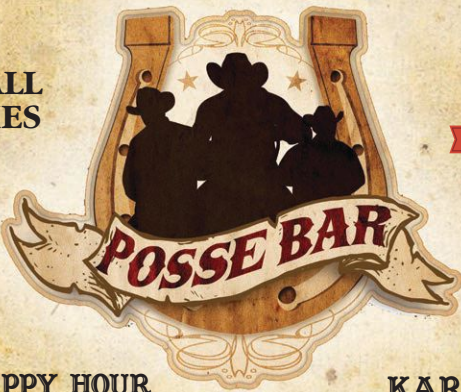
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MARV WATSON

Still Gangsta

Warren G reflects on his classic album *Regulate . . . G Funk Era*, 20 Years Later
 BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

West Coast hip-hop seemed invincible when rapper/producer Warren G dropped *Regulate . . . G Funk Era*. Released on June 7, 1994, the debut album tapped into the strength of Dr. Dre's *The Chronic* and Snoop Doggy Dogg's *Doggystyle* that came before it, while offering something distinctive along its path as a hip-hop classic. "Regulators! Mount up!" the title track called out before Warren G and Nate Dogg slickly traded rhymes with perfection over a smooth sample of "I Keep Forgetting" by Michael McDonald. Last month, Def Jam released an extended, 20th-anniversary edition of the album, allowing it to live on for another generation. We recently talked to the West Coast rapper, who reminisced about his efforts to create a sound in which "rhythm is life and life is rhythm."

OC WEEKLY: Looking back, did you have a sense at the time that *Regulate . . . G Funk Era* would be so successful and go on to become a classic?

WARREN G: I never thought it would get this big, but my thing was I just wanted people to hear my music. Being a hip-hop artist and just being into hip-hop, I wanted people to know who I was. Doing what I did, trying to be different, it ended up turning out to mean something incredible, which is being able to be in the game more than 20 years, still relevant and still making good music. I never imagined it, but I'm just happy I was able to create a great record.

The single "Regulate" is a classic featuring the late Nate Dogg.

It's a celebration for him, too, you know what I'm saying? Because he was a part of that. This is his anniversary, too. It's pretty messed up that he ain't here to really work with because he

was my working partner. For him not being here, it's just hard sometimes for me to work. That's kind of why I haven't put out a lot of music. I just miss him being around.

On "This DJ," you reference Santa Ana. What's the back story to that rhyme?

As a kid, I used to work in Santa Ana. . . . I had to mention that, just reminiscing on the times before I started really to make money.

What are your thoughts on the G-funk sound that you created and why it resonated so much with listeners?

It was different from what everybody was doing. I wasn't trying to do hardcore shit; I wanted to take a different approach. I started doing hard drums with nice, heavy bass lines with smooth melodies. That's how my brand of G-funk was. I was listening to a lot of '60s, '70s and '80s music. I was listening to the people before me, seeing how it was for them, what made them successful, and I mimicked it. That was some of the main shit that we did was sample. I look at it like this: If you can take a sample, redo it and get the people cleared, you're putting money in their pocket. There ain't nothing wrong with that.

Aside from the 20th-anniversary album reissue, what are you working on these days? I'm just working, man, just doing music. I'm working with a young cat out of Orange County. His name is Mike Slice. I know he's a very, very talented artist. I've been working with him along with just working with myself in doing music. We got some big things coming. We're going to show a lot of people what we've got because he's representing Orange County, so he's gotta come with it. I'm in OC all the time; that's my second home. I've been in Orange County for about 18 years, and I love it!

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THE DOLL HUT

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New Year's Day might seem like a natural time of celebration for revived punk roadhouse the Doll Hut. But it's not.

"That's actually the day the Hut officially closed," says current owner Michael "Mac" McGarvey. "I got the keys on the 2nd, and we started again from there."

The reopening of the Doll Hut is one of the things we remember most about 2014. One year later, it still feels surreal for the club's husky former talent buyer, who bought the place with his girlfriend, Tammy Butler, despite neither having a shred of bar-owning experience.

"Everything was a curveball for me," the 39-year-old Long Beach native says. "It was all kind of thrust upon me, the reality that I now own a business. I had run the front of the house before, but never the back half."

As small as it is—basically the size of a modest living room—the venue casts a long shadow in OC's music history, stretching back to the days when it was Linda's Doll Hut, run by its most well-known owner, Linda Jemison. We could give you the list of legendary bands, drunk exploits and children conceived in the parking lot. But then it was sold and misguidedly turned into a Latin bar. Then McGarvey kicked off a year of restoring the club's punk cred. He had to learn everything from business plans to booking bands and buying beer. "It was a struggle, but it didn't feel like it in the moment. I would say it was good," McGarvey says. "And hey, I'm still open."

Over the past 12 months, the Hut has stayed the course, with a nonstop calendar of shows featuring bands such as the Stitches, Narcoleptic Youth and D.I. But he's also been open-minded, temporarily straying from a stringent punk-rock ethos to booking bands and artists who don't necessarily fit the Hut's stereotype. That includes dedicating a whole day of the week to the majesty of metal, aptly dubbed Metal Mondays.

LOCALS ONLY » NATE JACKSON

"In the beginning, we were closed on Mondays, as the Doll Hut had traditionally been closed on Mondays," McGarvey recalls. "I actually sat up in bed one night and said, 'Why am I closed on Monday?'"

Little things like that have led new faces and bands to the bar. And the community that wanted the old Doll Hut back has mostly stuck by him, even after all the fanfare died down. McGarvey likens owning the bar to the feeling of getting a new girlfriend. "When you first get with her, you're excited about the newness of it," he says, "but eventually, that kinda wears off a little bit, and you have to find the substance in it that's gonna continue beyond that."

Through it all, he has stayed pretty much the same guy, working a day job in sales (no longer in telemarketing) and running the club at night. Although now, a lot more people seem to know his name when he's out and about. "I'm more of a behind-the-curtains kind of guy," he says. "A lot of people do say 'thank you' for opening the place back up. No one's called me an asshole yet for doing this."

Even with all that he's managed to accomplish over the past year, McGarvey doesn't think he's done anything yet to add to the lore of the place—other than keep it open for people to enjoy. With one year down and hopefully many more to go, that will change.

"I tell people [owning the Doll Hut] is a dream and a nightmare all rolled into one. I still think it's the best thing I ever did," he says. "I love the Doll Hut and I feel like it loves me, too, as crazy as that sounds."

NJACKSON@OCWEEKLY.COM

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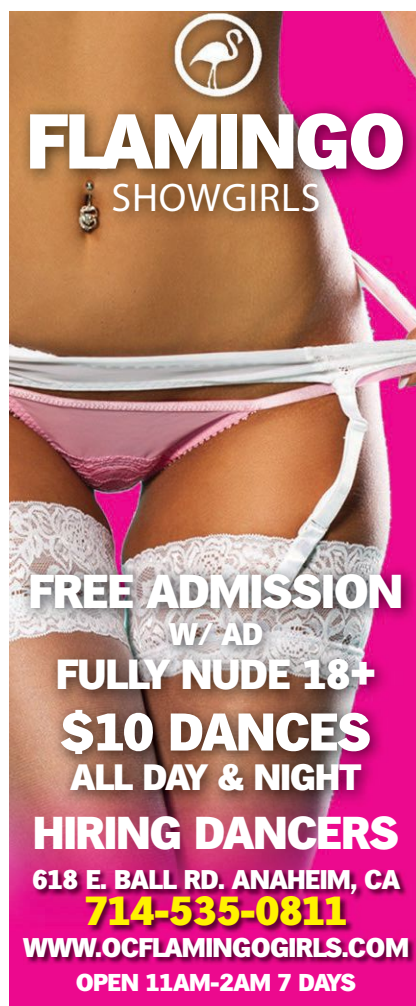
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BEST THING: 9 p.m., free. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com.

CASH'D OUT—THE NEXT BEST THING TO

JOHNNY CASH: Hot Rod Trio, Detour 91, 8 p.m., \$15. The Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, Ste. C, San Juan Capistrano, (949) 496-8930; www.thecoachhouse.com.

DOLL HUT ANNIVERSARY SHOW: 8 p.m., free. Doll Hut, 107 S. Adams St., Anaheim, (714) 533-1286; www.facebook.com/worldfamousdh.

J BOOG: Anuhea, 8 p.m., \$32. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com.

THE SECRET AFFAIR: 9 p.m., \$5-\$7. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292; www.alexbar.com.

SONS OF IGNATIUS: Dr. Janet Jack's Son, Will Chronix, Rocko Beal, Tyler Jay & Isaiah DeShon, The Gast, 7 p.m., \$10. Chain Reaction, 1652 W. Lincoln Ave., Anaheim, (714) 635-6067; www.allages.com.

TROMBONE SHORTY & ORLEANS AVENUE: 8 p.m., \$30. House of Blues, 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, (714) 778-2583; www.hob.com/anaheim.

SATURDAY, JAN. 3

COCO MONTOYA: Willie & the Road Tramps, Kingtime, 8 p.m., \$15. The Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, Ste. C, San Juan Capistrano, (949) 496-8930; www.thecoachhouse.com.

GARY STANIONIS NEW YEAR'S EVE AFTER

PARTY: 8 p.m., \$20. Spaghettini Rotisserie & Grill, 3005 Old Ranch Pkwy., Seal Beach, (562) 596-2199; www.spaghettini.com.

HAPPY DRUNK CARTEL: 8 p.m., free. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 871-7469; www.slidebarfullerton.com.

THE IRON MAIDENS: 3 p.m., free. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 871-7469; www.slidebarfullerton.com.

J BOOG: Anuhea, 8 p.m., \$32. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com.

1 YEAR ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND: 2 p.m., free. Doll Hut, 107 S. Adams St., Anaheim, (714) 533-1286; www.facebook.com/worldfamousdh.

PITY SEX: Whirr, 7 p.m., \$12. Chain Reaction, 1652 W. Lincoln Ave., Anaheim, (714) 635-6067; www.allages.com.

POWER SERGE: 8 p.m., \$18. House of Blues, 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, (714) 778-2583; www.hob.com/anaheim.

WAND: The Lovely Bad Things, Endless Bummer, 7 p.m., \$10-\$12. The Glass House, 200 W. Second St., Pomona, 909-865-3802; www.theglasshouse.us.

SUNDAY, JAN. 4

FULLY FULLWOOD REGGAE SUNDAYS: 3 p.m., \$5. Don the Beachcomber, 16278 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach, (562) 592-1321; www.donthebeachcomber.com.

HOLYCHILD: 10 p.m., \$8. Constellation Room at the Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.constellationroom.com.

SECRETS: Southern Lights, Set Sights for South, Asmara, Shot In the Dark, 7 p.m., \$13-\$15. Chain Reaction, 1652 W. Lincoln Ave., Anaheim, (714) 635-6067; www.allages.com.

MONDAY, JAN. 5

COUNTRY DANCIN' WITH DJ PATRICK: 6 p.m., free. La Cave, 1695 Irvine Ave., Costa Mesa, (949) 646-7944; www.lacaverestaurant.com.

LORD MARSHALL: 8 p.m., free. Doll Hut, 107 S. Adams St., Anaheim, (714) 533-1286; www.facebook.com/worldfamousdh.

133 BAND: 7 p.m., \$10. Mozambique, 1740 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, (949) 715-7777; www.mozambiqueoc.com.

THE ORIGINALITES: 9 p.m., free. Gallagher's Pub & Grill, 300 Pacific Coast Hwy., Ste. 113, Huntington Beach, (714) 536-2422; www.gallagherspub.com.

TUESDAY, JAN. 6

ALOHA RADIO: 7 p.m., \$5. Mozambique, 1740 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, (949) 715-7777; www.mozambiqueoc.com.

COMING OF SAGE: 7 p.m., free. The White House, 340 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach; whitehouserestaurant.com.

KIRK WILSON: 6 p.m., free. Ralph Brennan's Jazz Kitchen, 1590 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, (714) 776-5200; www.rbjazzkitchen.com.

WILLIE NELSON & FAMILY: 8 p.m., \$65.50-\$85.50. City National Grove of Anaheim, 2200 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, (714) 712-2750; www.citynationalgroveofanaheim.com.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 7

THE DICTATORS NYC: 8 p.m., \$15-\$17. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292; www.alexbar.com.

KING TUFF: White Fang, Feels, 8 p.m., \$15. Constellation Room at the Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.constellationroom.com.

MY DOUBLE MY BROTHER: 8 p.m., free before 8 p.m.; \$5 after. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com.

TERRY WOLLMAN AND MELANIE TAYLOR: 7:30 p.m., \$15. Spaghettini Rotisserie & Grill, 3005 Old Ranch Pkwy., Seal Beach, (562) 596-2199; www.spaghettini.com.

THURSDAY, JAN. 8

BLAZING DUELING PIANO SHOW: 9 p.m., free. Ralph Brennan's Jazz Kitchen, 1590 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, (714) 776-5200; www.rbjazzkitchen.com.

DVBBS: 9 p.m., \$20-\$30. Sutra, 1870 Harbor Blvd., Ste. 200, Costa Mesa, (949) 722-7103; www.sutraoc.com.

FAYUCA: 8 p.m., free. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 871-7469; www.slidebarfullerton.com.

FLESH EATERS: 8 p.m., \$20. Constellation Room at the Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.constellationroom.com.

JAMES CLAY GARRISON & THE GIANT PEACH: 7 p.m., \$5. Mozambique, 1740 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, (949) 715-7777; www.mozambiqueoc.com.

KID INK: 8 p.m., \$27. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com.

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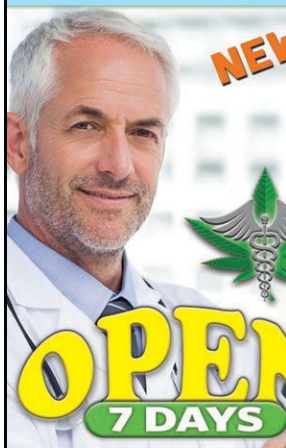
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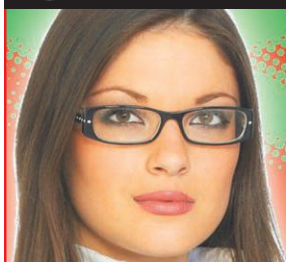
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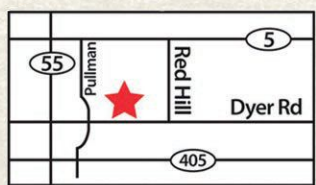
 

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We accept all credit cards
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810 Health

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You could be eligible for a clinical research study of an investigational medication if you have headaches 15 or more days per month, with at least 8 days of those being migraine days. Local doctors are currently conducting a clinical research study evaluating an investigational medication for migraine prevention in individuals experiencing migraines at least 8 days a month. To qualify for this study you must:

- * Be between 18 and 60 years of age
 - * Have headaches 15 or more days per month, with 8 or more of the headache days being migraine days, for 3 months prior to the study
 - * Meet other criteria
- Study-required visits, tests, and study medications will be provided for qualifying participants. If you qualify for this study, reimbursement for study-related time and travel may be provided. To learn more, please contact:

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WITH AD



\$50/1HR
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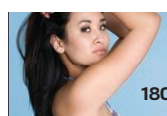
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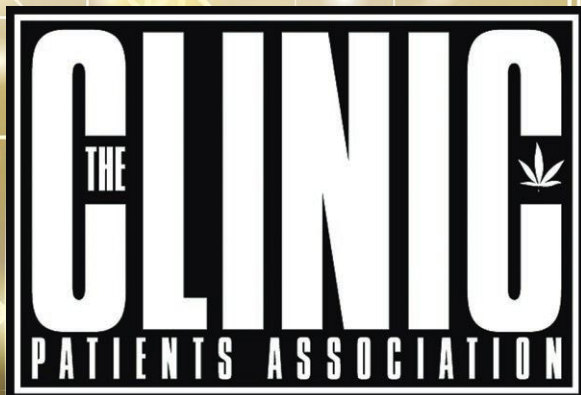
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FTP 7G 8TH
ON ALL TOP SHELF

LIMIT ONE 7 GRAM 8TH PER FIRST TIME PATIENT

(One strain only, can not combine with any other deals. Redeem upon first visit. One FTP per patient)

Happy New Year!

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LIMIT 1 PER PATIENT. CANNOT COMBINE
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**ALL SHELVES
\$35 CAP**

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+GG**



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